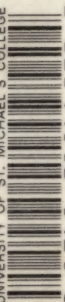


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THE LIFE OF BLESSED JOHN EUDES

BY

FATHER M. RUSSELL, S.J.



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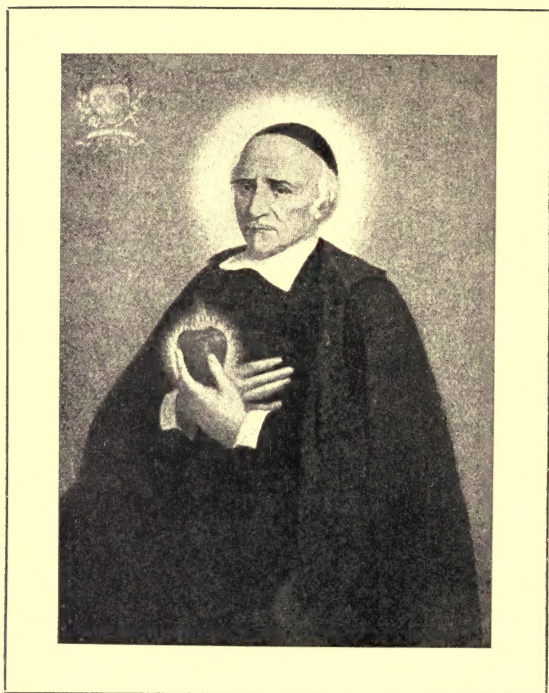
PRESENTED BY

Rt. Rev. William A. Egan



Rev. F. J. Morrissey.

THE LIFE OF
BLESSED JOHN EUDES



BLESSED JOHN EUDES.

The Life of Blessed John Eudes

BY THE

REV. MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE ANGELS," "IDYLS OF KILLOWEN,"
ETC.

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LONDON
W



MAY 26 1953

THE recent beatification of Blessed John Eudes and the triduums of thanksgiving celebrated in his honour by his sons, the Eudist Fathers, and by his spiritual daughters, the Congregation of Our Lady of Refuge and the Nuns of the Good Shepherd, have fixed the attention of the faithful on this great servant of God, who was almost unknown to them before, though he lived at the same time as St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Francis Regis, and others whose names are dear and familiar to us all. It is hoped that the following pages will help to make *his* name also dear and familiar.

M. R.

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Blessed John Eudes.

CHAPTER I.

HIS BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

ON two successive Sundays of April, 1909, the 18th day of the month and the 25th, Joan of Arc and John Eudes were beatified. A young French maiden and an old French priest were proposed to the veneration of the faithful almost on the same day, though their lives had been separated by two hundred years. During the five centuries that have nearly elapsed since her cruel death, the Maid of Orleans has been held in vivid remembrance as one of the most interesting figures in history ; but Father Eudes has been, to a great extent, overlooked and forgotten for more than two hundred years, except among those who owe filial allegiance to him as their spiritual father. For he was one of those fortunate souls who are honoured by God with the mighty privilege of influencing myriads of other souls, not only during their own short term on earth, but during hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of years after they themselves have gone to heaven. Such is the happy lot of the Founder of permanent religious

institutions in the Church ; and we claim this glory for Blessed John Eudes at the outset, in order that we may from the first enlist in his favour the interest of many readers, who will be ready to love and revere him when they learn that he is the founder of two sister Orders that are represented in Ireland by the convents at High Park, Drumcondra, and in Gloucester Street, Dublin, as well as by the convents of the Good Shepherd in Limerick, Cork, Belfast, New Ross, and Waterford. In England also there are several convents belonging to each of these admirable Congregations: Our Lady of Refuge at Bartestree, near Hereford, Birmingham, Monmouth, Mold, and Waterlooville in Hampshire ; Convents of the Good Shepherd at Bristol, Manchester, Cardiff, Finchley (London), Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hammersmith (London), Ford and Wavertree (Liverpool), Ashford (Middlesex), and in Scotland at Glasgow. Father Eudes' own Congregation of Jesus and Mary, the members of which are usually called Eudists, has confined its labours chiefly to France, and, in the New World, to Nova Scotia, and a few other places. It recovered with difficulty from the chaos of the French Revolution. These circumstances have delayed till now the full recognition of the personal greatness of their Founder, who, apart from the magnificent work for souls that he has thus done, and continues to do, for souls through generation after generation of his sons and daughters, was himself a hero of zeal and sanctity—the

great missionary of the seventeenth century, the most effective of apostolic preachers, author of very many books full of wisdom and unction, Blessed Margaret Mary's precursor in promoting a special devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and styled by the Sovereign Pontiff himself, Pius X., the originator of their liturgical worship.

The father of this great servant of God was Isaac Eudes, of Ri, a village in Lower Normandy, and in the diocese of Séez, about nine miles from Argentan, on the road to Tours. He had at first aspired to the priesthood, and was on the point of being ordained subdeacon, when circumstances occurred which seemed to show that God wished to be served by him in another state of life. All his brothers were carried off by a terrible plague which ravaged the country in the summer of 1587, and Isaac Eudes was obliged to undertake the support of the family. Besides the cultivation of their small estate, he qualified himself as a surgeon, and through his after life he used generously the opportunities of exercising charity and kindness afforded by the position of a country doctor. All had recourse to him in their troubles of every kind. As a token of his personal piety it is mentioned that he read every day till the end of his life the Office in the Breviary which it would have been his privilege and his duty to say if he had been able to pursue his first vocation.

About the year 1598, when he was probably

thirty-two years old, Isaac Eudes married Martha Corbin, of whom an incident is related which hardly seems to prove the qualities in proof of which her son's biographers record it. One of Madame Eudes' relatives was killed in a duel. Cardinal Richelieu's recent legislation against duelling seems to have enacted penalties even against the dead body of the victim in one of those so-called affairs of honour. Madame Eudes buried her kinsman in one of the fields by night, and then she had the field ploughed up, or at least enough of it to convince the officers of the law who came next morning that search for the corpse was useless.

Better testimony to the worth of the parents of Blessed John Eudes is borne by the holy man himself. In his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*—a brief record that he drew up, late in life, of the chief favours conferred on him by God—he says: "God bestowed on me the grace of making me be born of a father and mother who were in a modest condition of life, and who lived in His fear; I have every reason to believe that they died in His grace and His love." *Une condition médiocre*—not belonging to the rich and proud aristocracy, nor yet in abject poverty, which has its special dangers and excludes from the boon of a liberal education. The Wise Man showed his wisdom in praying: "Lord, give me neither beggary nor riches" (Proverbs xxx. 8).

In another place, dedicating his first book, *La Vie et le Royaume de Jésus dans les âmes chrétiennes*, to our Divine Lord Himself, Father

Eudes said to Him: "Because I cannot look up to Thee, O my Lord Jesus, without seeing Her who is seated at Thy right hand, who conceived Thee and made Thee reign within herself in so admirable a manner, and in whom Thou hast always been living and reigning so perfectly, I salute and honour Her after Thee in all the ways that I can as Thy most honourable Mother, Mother of life and love, and as my sovereign lady and my very dear Mother, to whom I belong by an infinity of titles. For, besides being born and reared in a place that belongs specially to her, it was through her intervention and her prayers that Thou gavest me being and life. The mother of whom it pleased Thee to make me be born, having been several years without children, made a vow to Thee in honour of Thy most holy Mother, and subsequently, feeling that she had been heard and seeing her desire accomplished, she, accompanied by my father, carried me to a place* specially consecrated to Thy most honoured Mother, in order to fulfil there her vow, to thank the Blessed Virgin, and to offer and give me to Her and through Her to Thee."

John Eudes was born November 14, 1601. He had four sisters and two brothers, Francis and Charles, both of them distinguished enough to be commemorated by local monuments. The youngest, Charles, adopted his father's profession. Francis Eudes is known as Mézerai,

* Notre-Dame de la Recouvrance at Tourailles, about fifteen miles from the home of the Eudes.

as in the next century Francis Arouet is too well known as Voltaire. Mézerai, a pupil of the Jesuits at Caen, followed a literary career in Paris, wrote a famous History of France, was admitted to the French Academy, *l'un des Quarante*, as successor to Voiture, and made a good Christian will two years before dying a good Christian death, July 10, 1683, aged seventy-three years. He left two hundred pounds for a monument "to my brother, Father Eudes, although indeed his virtue and his character have raised a more beautiful monument than the hands of men can raise to him." The eldest brother had died three years before him. But we are only at the beginning of our account of that holy life.

Blessed John Eudes, who was to open so many refuges for penitent sinners and to go on for ever doing so through his spiritual daughters, was not himself one of the penitent saints. There was not even in his life one of those epochs of conversion to which some saints, ingenious in self-depreciation, contrive to look back with shame and confusion. Martha Corbin's first-born child was drawn strongly to God from the dawn of reason. As soon as he was able to go alone, he was fond of stealing to the church and praying in a hidden corner. It was there that he was found one day that his careful mother missed him from her side. Another day, when he was about nine years old, a young companion, Desdigières, struck him on the face. The little fellow had heard of our

Lord's injunction about turning the other cheek, and he obeyed it literally, to the grievous discomfiture of his assailant, who used to tell the story against himself in after years when Eudes had become famous.

In spite of his early maturity of mind and heart, the pious boy was not allowed to make his First Communion till his twelfth year. After this epoch, which he himself tells us was the Feast of Pentecost, and which his biographers fix more precisely as May 26, 1613, he approached the altar with great care and devotion every month, although at that time there were few in the parish who received the Blessed Eucharist more than once a year.

It was a period in which evils prevailed for which John Eudes was raised up to provide a remedy. Religion and education were by no means in a flourishing state. For many years before the country had been distracted by religious strife and troubles of all kinds. There were no schools. This thoughtful, pious boy had to walk each day a distance considerable for one so young in order to learn the rudiments of knowledge from a worthy priest in a neighbouring parish, James Blanette, who grounded him carefully in Latin and Greek. His affectionate mother had at first grudged allowing him to go so far out of her sight ; but she soon had to make a greater sacrifice. In 1608, Henry IV. (who had become a Catholic only ten years before, and was to be murdered two years later) invited the Jesuits to establish themselves in

Caen.* This interesting capital of Normandy was thus flattered by a poet of that day :—

Caen par son assiette et commode et plaisante,
Par son air toujours pur et sa douceur riante,
Par ses prés, par ses eaux, et par mille beautés,
Justement le dispute aux plus belles cités.

Caen for its pleasant site, convenient space,
Its air pure always, and its smiling grace,
Its meads, its waters, thousand beauties rare,
With fairest cities justly may compare.

In this city of beautiful churches, with which he was to be closely connected for the rest of his life, John Eudes took up his abode on the Feast of St. Denis, October 9, 1615, when classes re-opened in the Royal College of the Mount. As there was room for only twenty boarders, he was one of the eight hundred extern scholars scattered over the town. His first master was Francis Robin. "I studied under his direction up to the second class, by a special favour of our Lord, for he was a very virtuous and holy professor, and he often spoke to us of God with extraordinary fervour. He helped me more than I can tell in the way of salvation." He was just ten years older than his illustrious pupil, whom he outlived ten months; he was not yet a priest, and had only finished his noviceship the year before. Under him John made rapid and solid progress in virtue and learning. He had already, it would

* It may be well to warn some readers that the name of this Norman town of William the Conqueror, which must often be mentioned in connection with Blessed John Eudes, is pronounced somewhat like our own Cong of County Mayo.

seem, before leaving home, been allowed by his confessor, after prudent delay, to make a vow of chastity. One is surprised that his entrance into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin was delayed till his third year at College ; but he writes in his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei* : “ I was received into the Congregation of Our Lady at the College of the very reverend Jesuit Fathers at Caen, about the year 1618, in which Society our Lord bestowed on me very great graces through the medium of His most holy Mother.” And at another time he repeats this as if about somebody else : “ I know a servant of God who has received from His divine goodness an infinite number of special graces through the intervention of the Most Holy Virgin. One source of his happiness was to have made his studies in the College of the Jesuit Fathers, and to have been admitted there into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, in which our Lord bestowed upon him great mercies through the means of His Blessed Mother.” Father Eudes has always been mentioned among the glories of the Sodality in the handbooks of Children of Mary.

At the period of which we are writing youthful aspirants to the priesthood were not yet provided with the helps which Father Eudes was himself destined to supply to future generations of Levites. There were no seminaries. This, and his absence from home, and the secrecy in which he thought it well to wrap the deeper religious aspirations of his soul, account partly

for the blindness of his good parents as to the designs of Providence upon their beloved son. They wished to settle him comfortably in the world beside themselves; and they had even ventured to choose a suitable partner for him. Nay, they had gone so far, it seems, as to make overtures to the parents of the young lady in question, if not to herself, and Isaac Eudes felt quite aggrieved when his son upset all these arrangements by declaring his fixed purpose of becoming a priest. The only consolation in the circumstances was that at least he was not burying himself in a monastery. He would still be near them, and might do something for his family in return for the sacrifices made in order to keep him at his studies. And so, grudgingly enough, the young student was allowed to return to Caen to follow a course of theology in the University. He had already made two years' study of philosophy under the Jesuits with considerable distinction, although he had not presented himself for his degree. In like manner, his latest, fullest, and most authoritative biographer, Father Denis Boulay, a member of his Congregation, records that he abstained from taking out his degree at the end of his theological course, copying in this particular the two great servants of God who were (like himself) to reform the clergy—Cardinal de Bérulle, the Founder of the French Oratory, and M. Olier, the Founder of the Society of St. Sulpice. Father Boulay adds that "God doubtless inspired this resolution in order to

repress among his future sons the restless and disturbing eagerness that they might have displayed in gaining those marks of distinction which might be for some the occasion of great dangers."

While applying himself earnestly to his theological studies, he advanced in piety and union with God. With the aid of his confessor he became convinced that God meant him to use the aids and restraints of community life in attaining the degree of priestly perfection to which he was called; and finally the special form of the religious state in which God wished him to sanctify himself was the Oratory, founded in Paris in the year 1611, and already in ten years with twenty-five houses established, the last of them only ten months before in this good Caen itself. The first local Superior, Father Achilles de Harlay Saucy, had no difficulty in seeing that John Eudes was a very promising recruit; and his report made him be accepted at once by Father de Bérulle, who summoned him to Paris. After a struggle more violent than the one described before, he succeeded in extorting the consent and the blessing of his father and mother, and he left Ri for ever. He was welcomed in the Rue St. Honoré on the 25th of March, 1623, the Feast of the Annunciation of our Blessed Lady, as her loving client notes with joy and gratitude in his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei*.

CHAPTER II.

HIS FIRST YEARS IN THE ORATORY.

WHEN John Eudes joined the French Oratory on Lady Day, March 25, 1623, that institute was only eleven years old, and he himself was just twice as old. Peter de Bérulle in his thirty-fifth year had founded it in Paris on the model of the Oratory of Jesus which St. Philip Neri had founded in Rome some sixty years before ; but there were from the first many important differences between the two, both in aims and in appliances, both in the objects sought and the means used to attain them. France and Paris were very different from Rome and Italy. Probably it was not for the real advantage of the younger Society that its Founder was so able and so distinguished a man that he was forced in spite of himself to take part in many public affairs of great importance that took him away from his spiritual children. From these unwelcome distractions he was, indeed, free when the postulant from Caen presented himself. He was not slow to discern the extraordinary qualities of his new disciple, and to recognize in him a spirit akin to his own. What that spirit was may be judged from his book *Les Grandeurs de Jésus*, which had appeared

only a few weeks before Eudes' entrance—one of the many devout writings which won for its author from Urban VIII. the title of "Apostle of the Word Incarnate."

Under such a master the novice gave his whole soul to the study of spiritual things, and made such progress that his Superior soon judged him fit to teach others and made him preach in public. At that time he was only in minor orders, which he had received at Caen, September 19, 1620.

This premature exercise of his preaching powers is one of the many parallelisms which some of his biographers are fond of discovering between him and St. Francis of Sales. One of these we have passed over unnoticed. When our young Norman cleric made up his mind to become an Oratorian, and had in vain implored his parents to give their consent and their blessing to this greater sacrifice and further separation, he thought he could avoid their positive prohibition by stealing away privately to Paris; but when he had gone some ten or twelve miles on his way, the horse that he rode refused to go one step forward. Like St. Francis of Sales in similar circumstances on the road from Chambéry to Annecy, he took the behaviour of the poor animal as an indication of God's will. He returned to his father's house to renew his struggle, and to succeed.

His first essay as a preacher was eminently successful. His words from the first made a deep impression on his hearers and produced

some marvellous conversions, presaging the prodigies that he was in after years to work over entire provinces. He had all the gifts that could lend force and efficacy to the utterances of his apostolic heart. An impressive presence, a grave sweetness of demeanour, a rich and flexible voice, a very retentive memory, were some of the endowments that marked him out for a popular preacher of extraordinary attractiveness and power. As M. de Montzey says : "Natural eloquence, which the habit of preaching improved, was improved in Father Eudes by those exterior advantages which assist an orator's talent ; he was well made and had that imposing air which, as time goes on, becomes venerable ; his action was easy and his voice good. But, above all, like St. Francis of Sales, he was himself an image of all the virtues he recommended to his audience."

"Like St. Francis of Sales." For so comes in again the name of the fascinating saint who had died at Lyons the year before John Eudes placed himself in the hands of Father de Bérulle to be moulded like clay in the hands of the potter. The Superior General of the Oratorians was still Father de Bérulle, but he was soon very reluctantly to change that title for a higher, or at least a grander one. At this juncture his sovereign, Louis XIII, sent him to Rome to smooth away certain difficulties about the English marriage—the marriage, namely, between the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I, and the sister of the French King, Henrietta

Maria, over whom Bossuet was to deliver one of his famous *Oraisons Funébres*. Bérulle succeeded so well in his delicate mission that his royal master rewarded him (as no doubt he deemed it) by getting him made Cardinal by Pope Urban VIII in 1627.

When setting out for Rome on this occasion, in August, 1624, Father de Bérulle bade John Eudes to be ready to receive subdeaconship during the Ember Days of the following December. Accordingly at that date he was sent to Séez, and on the Feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21, 1624, he was ordained subdeacon by his own bishop, Monseigneur Camus de Pontcarré.

He was now bound officially to the daily recitation of the Divine Office. He records this as a great grace in his *Memoriale*. We may guess how he performed this duty from the counsels that he gives on this subject in his *Mémoriale de la Vie Ecclésiastique* (page 59 of the third volume of his *Oeuvres Complètes*). He calls the saying of the Office "one of the grandest and most important functions of the priesthood, an action all holy, all angelic, all divine, which is common to us with the Angels, with the Saints, with the Most Holy Virgin, with Jesus Christ our Lord, and with the Three Divine Persons who are in a continual exercise of praise and glorification towards one another." Looking upon it thus, we cannot but feel "a great desire to do this duty well, with all the exterior respect and modesty and all the interior

devotion that will be possible for us." Father Eudes' other beautiful reflections on the subdiaconate may be found at pp. 175-179 of the volume just referred to.

The pious subdeacon returned to Aubervilliers, then a village, now a town, to the north-east of Paris, where his superior had placed him after his year of probation, for a further term of two years to prepare for the priesthood and the apostolic life that was to follow it. At Aubervilliers there was a celebrated sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin under the title of Notre Dame des Vertus,* which had attracted many an illustrious pilgrim — St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, St. John Baptist de la Salle. It is believed that St. Ignatius Loyola made this pilgrimage in 1529, five years before that Assumption Day when he and his six first disciples took their vows at Montmartre. In this holy place thus specially dedicated to his Blessed Mother, John Eudes spent months, and would gladly have spent years, preparing for the higher dignities to which he was bound to aspire. Father de Bérulle, on his return from Rome, sent him to Bayeux to be ordained deacon at the end of March, 1625; and then nine months were allotted to his final preparation for the priesthood to be received in the Ember Days of the following December.

We are not left to guess what were this holy deacon's ideas about the dignity of the priest-

* This title refers to "miracles" rather than to "virtues."

hood. He has told us some of them in the fifth part of his *Mémorial de la Vie Ecclésiastique*, ninth chapter, where he expatiates on the priest's awful power in terms that almost frighten our colder hearts: "To be a priest, is to be an angel; and in fact priests are called angels in Holy Scripture, because they fill on earth the office that angels fill in heaven. For the God of heaven and earth wishes to be surrounded and escorted on earth as He is in Heaven; and these angels of earth are priests who have greater power than the angels, than the cherubim and seraphim of Heaven. This is the reason why they ought to be, if it were possible, purer than the angels, brighter than the cherubim, more burning with divine love than the seraphim." And then, after many daring statements which I shrink from repeating, though they are literally true, he exclaims: "Oh! the power, oh! the dignity of the priesthood, which surpasses incomparably all the dignities of earth and even of heaven, all except the unspeakable dignity of the Mother of God!"

With such sentiments one may conjecture the anxious preparation that Father Eudes made for the sacrament that would confer upon him that title. In this preparation he was assisted by Father Charles de Condren, to whom Father de Bérulle, now more than ever distracted by State affairs, specially confided him—Father de Condren, who was venerated as a saint by canonized saints like Vincent de Paul and uncanonized saints like M. Olier; Father de

Dign
? a
priest

Condren, of whom St. Jane Frances de Chantal said : "If God has given our Blessed Founder to the Church in order to instruct men, it seems to me that He has made Père de Condren capable of instructing angels."

John Eudes was ordained priest on the Saturday of Quarter Tense, December 20, 1625. He then imposed upon himself a privation which perhaps he never afterwards repeated—abstaining without necessity from the Great Act that he was now qualified to perform, and of which he himself said : "The Holy Sacrifice is something so great that three eternities would be needed to offer it worthily : the first to prepare for it, the second to celebrate it, the third to make a suitable thanksgiving for it." For his first Mass he waited till the midnight of Christmas. As children approach the Eucharistic Table for the first time on some very special festival, in order that the recurrence of that day, as the years come round, may remind them of their First Communion, so that Midnight Mass of 1625 was, no doubt, for Father Eudes the central date of his life, to which he looked back with the wistful fondness that another French priest expressed long afterwards :

O jour de la première Messe !
Pas de jour aussi beau que toi.

The first Mass was said at the Blessed Virgin's altar in the Church of the Oratory, Rue St. Honoré, Paris. The material building still stands, but the altar has disappeared : for

by a curious fate—to which certain things that have still to be told will add significance—when Napoleon restored the practice of religion in France after his own fashion, the Oratorian Church was given to the Huguenots, and it is to this day “le Temple,” the chief Protestant place of worship in Paris.

John Eudes was now a priest of God, “a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech.” Though only in his twenty-fifth year, he was mature and fit to be an instrument in God’s hand. Every day of his life since he came to the use of reason had been a preparation for his work. But God’s providence arranged for him an additional year or two of special training. Some bodily infirmity which is not further explained unfitted him for external work. For some time at the country house of the Oratory at Aubervilliers, and afterwards in the Paris community, he devoted himself to prayer and study, especially the prayerful study of the Sacred Scriptures, of which he acquired a profound knowledge with little aid from the commentators. All the while he was steeping his soul in earnest mental prayer; and, like St. Thomas Aquinas, he learned more from the crucifix than from books. His preaching was indeed to fulfil the ideal of that same glorious saint, *contemplata tradere*: he would proclaim and inculcate truths and feelings that he had made his own by long and deep contemplation.

This hidden life was the best preparation for his public life. These few months of seeming

inaction gave substance and unction to the preaching of fifty overcrowded years. No doubt, too, his pen was not idle in his quiet cell, and some beginning was made of that long series of ascetic writings which ever since have influenced many priestly souls, and which are likely henceforth to exercise a wider influence, as it is only now that many of them are given to the religious world in print. We will speak of them in detail later on.

When the young Oratorian's health was re-established, Abbé de Bérulle (not yet Cardinal, but soon to be) called him to Paris that he might prepare finally for the ministry of the word by hearing the best preachers of the metropolis. But, after all, his active life was not to begin in the pulpit. He was called first to a very different exercise of zeal.

A fearful pestilence, Asiatic cholera, broke out in France, and for ten years, from 1627, it ravaged province after province, laying the country desolate. It is impossible for us at the present time to realize the panic created by this dreadful visitation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "The want of cleanliness in the towns," says Father Boulay, "the insufficiency of medical resources, the absence of any regular police service, the contagious nature of the malady, grossly exaggerated by the fears and ignorance of the people—all tended to increase the mortality tremendously." Those who were stricken down were often abandoned by their nearest relatives and left to their

miserable fight with death. Whole villages were depopulated, the dead were left unburied, and wolves and vultures fought for their prey.

In some such plight as this was the district round Argentan in July, 1627. Isaac Eudes wrote to his son, who was shocked to think of the peril in which not only the lives but the salvation of his countrymen lay. He felt himself inspired to rush to their relief. His Superior tried his resolution by every argument and persuasion, but gave at last his consent, ordering him, however, not to succour the plague-stricken without having learned from wise and experienced persons the precautions that their prudence might suggest, in order not to expose his life uselessly.

The next morning this young priest of twenty-six years of age set out on foot on the road to Normandy, with his breviary and a small knapsack. Father Allard, the Superior of the Oratory at Caen, sent him to the Bishop of Séez with a beautiful letter, bearing witness to his virtue, learning, and modesty, and asking for him leave to exercise the priestly ministry "in those places especially where on account of the calamity of the times and the epidemic then raging priests are wanting or are absent"—*desunt aut absunt sacerdotes*. "The order of charity demands [adds Father Allard] that to the land which gave him life and grace and Orders he shall first pay back what he has of knowledge and virtue and prudence and labour and soul." *Terræ*—not to France his

native land, but his native diocese of Séez, his native parish of Ri, *son pays* rather than *sa patrie*.

He did not, however, turn aside to see his family at Ri, but went in haste to Séez and Falaise, where the Vicar-General, M. Gervaise, gladly gave him the fullest powers and sent him to the districts where the plague raged most furiously. In the terror that prevailed no house would take as a lodger one who was to live in the very thick of the pestilence. One holy priest, named Laurens, gave him the shelter of his roof and a share of the scanty pittance on which he lived.

For more than two months these two heroes toiled side by side in the infected district, tending the sick, helping most of them to die, and helping to bury the dead. Terror brought many a sinner to the knees of the young priest, that they might be ready to meet death that was striking down so many victims on all sides. It was this episode that justified Monseigneur Touchet, Bishop of Orleans, in comparing our Beato to the heroic Bishop of Marseilles, Belsunce, who, a hundred years later, showed such courage and devotion in a similar emergency that his name is canonized even in the poetry of Protestant England.* In his eloquent address at the Vatican, thanking Pius X for proposing Joan d'Arc, Father Eudes, and others to the veneration of the faithful, the Bishop of

* Why drew Marseilles' good bishop purer breath
When Nature sickened and each gale was death?

—Pope's "Essay on Man."

Orleans claimed Blessed Joan as one of the glories of France. He then went on : "Ours, too, is Father Eudes, the profound mystic, the indefatigable missionary, the creator of seminaries, the reformer of the clergy, the saviour of thousands of penitent women, and, like another Belsunce, the fearless helper of the cholera victims."

These words, however, of the French bishop are premature. John Eudes has as yet earned only the last of these titles. But now, indeed, he must set himself to the work of his life ; he "must be about his Father's business." He had come into the plague-stricken districts in the middle of August, and it is now All Saints. The pestilence has been conquered, though with terrible loss of life. Father Eudes asks his Superior (who has just been made Cardinal) what he wishes him to do next. The answer bids him join his brother Oratorians at Caen, there to exercise his priestly functions, but holding himself in readiness to join with certain Fathers in giving missions in various parts of the country and preparing for this special duty which has indeed to be the work of his after-life. His missionary labours continued for half a century. He spent three or four years thus at Caen, chiefly in the busy solitude of his cell, "condens, componens quae mox depromere posset," if we may tamper a little with Horace's familiar line.

In the middle of this quiet time he suffered a great bereavement in the death of his first

spiritual Father. Cardinal de Bérulle towards the end of his fifty-fifth year died as he had prayed to die—at the altar. He had returned to the Rue St. Honoré grievously ill, but persisted in saying Mass each morning. On the 2nd of October, 1629, he ascended the altar for the last time, and began the Votive Mass of the Incarnation. After reading the Gospel he fainted, but recovering, he resumed the sacred rites. When he had pronounced the solemn words before the Consecration, *Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae, sed et cunctae familiae tuae, quaesumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias*, he sank into the arms of those who were serving him at the altar. He received the last Sacraments, and he was able to give his last blessing to all his children, present and absent, before expiring peacefully near the tabernacle of his Incarnate and Eucharistic Lord.*

Father Eudes grieved for the loss of the pious Cardinal, though he had seen little of him after his first year in the Oratory. But through all his journeyings De Bérulle had by correspondence kept in close union with one from whom he expected much for God's glory.

Cardinal Richelieu, who was jealous of Cardinal de Bérulle's influence with the King

* Montzey does not tell us where he found this very apposite couplet.

Coepta sub extremis nequeo nunc sacra sacerdos
Perficere, at saltem victima perficiam.

I cannot now as priest the sacrifice complete :
Lord, let me finish it as victim at Thy feet.

and with the Queen Mother, Mary de Medici, had plotted to get him removed to Rome as French Ambassador. Death had now removed him still more completely ; but the Oratorians were afraid of Richelieu's interference in the appointment of a successor, and accordingly the Fathers in Paris and its neighbourhood made haste to elect Father de Condren without summoning the Superiors of the houses in the country. The transcendent merit of the new Superior made them all glad to overlook any irregularity in the mode of his election. No one rejoiced more than Father Eudes, who had received most of his spiritual training from Father de Condren, and who knew his sanctity and great gifts.

Two years later the quiet course of his public and private labours at Caen was interrupted by his old friend, the plague, which broke out there again with greater virulence than ever, early in the spring of 1631, carrying off great numbers in a few days and throwing the citizens into consternation. All who were able to escape fled, unhappily even some who were bound to remain with their poor people. Father Eudes begged his Superior, Father Gaspar de Répichon, who had entered the Oratory three months after himself, to allow him to devote himself to the care of the plague-stricken. The young Superior scrupled the risking of a life from which they expected so much ; but when Father Eudes urged his petition most earnestly and appealed to the permission granted by their Founder

himself in similar circumstances, he yielded his reluctant consent ; and Father Eudes went forth again with joy to the combat.

With cheerful courage Father Eudes entered upon his second campaign against the cholera, which even as late as the middle of the last century, within the memory of some who are living still, had terrors that sanitation and the advance of medical knowledge have mitigated considerably. It is hard for us to realize the abject terror that the advent of the plague caused at an earlier epoch, such as that to which we are looking back.

The victims that had crowded into the hospital were attended by some Capuchins and Jesuits. But these were chiefly the very poor, the lodgers in humble tenements, who were forced to go elsewhere. Those who had homes of their own refused to quit their houses ; and so they were taken at their word and forbidden to issue hence, in order not to spread the pestilence. From house to house Father Eudes went on his errands of mercy, giving temporal and spiritual help to the most destitute and most abandoned. In order not to carry infection to any lodging that he might be able to procure, he preferred to banish himself from all society for the time, and took his rest at night in a large cask in a field, to which the abbess of the neighbouring Benedictine Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity, Laurentia de Budos, sent his food every day. This field was known for a long time as the Saint's

Meadow. It is now cut up into gardens. This barrel reminds Father Boulay of the Patriarch of Alexandria, St. Athanasius, who hid himself in a tomb in order not to expose to the Emperor's anger those who would have given him lodging. So, adds Father Boulay, our charitable apostle, all the time that the plague lasted, had no other shelter than this cask, which served at once as his refectory, his dormitory, and his oratory ; for he spent most of the night, not in sleeping, but in praying for his poor patients, imploring God's mercy on all sinners, and asking grace and courage to help them till the end. This is the parallel case that the incident recalls to the good priest ; but a worthy layman, M. Joly, thinks rather of Diogenes and his tub, and calls Father Eudes a " Diogène chrétien."

In the midst of these toils and dangers he is told that the dreadful plague has attacked his Superior and two of his confrères. To quote Father Boulay again, he knew too well the order of charity not to run at once to their assistance. Father de Répichon died after receiving from him all the sacraments and consolations that the dying need ; the others conquered in the terrible struggle, and he helped them back to health ; and then he returned to his beloved poor. As before at Argentan, he induced the inhabitants of the city to appeal to the Mother of Mercy ; statues of the Blessed Virgin were set up at the city gates and at St. Peter's Bridge over the Orne. The plague

slackened and then stayed its ravages. The city resumed its ordinary life, and Father Eudes returned to his cell.

He had scarcely re-entered his religious home when he fell grievously sick in his turn. The physician thought there was no hope. But our saint was needed still. Holy nuns and the poor that he had saved from death stormed heaven with prayers that he might be spared to them ; and to his grievous disappointment he recovered. Two years later he wrote to a Religious who seemed to be on the point of death : " Ah ! my dear Sister, if you have any little grain of charity for your poor brother, beg of our Lord, when you will be near Him, to draw me soon out of this place of sin and imperfection in order to put me in a place and in a state in which we can love purely, perfectly, and unceasingly." But, thank God, this prayer was not heard. He had a long life before him still.

CHAPTER III.

HIS MISSIONS AND PREACHING.

THE most striking characteristic of Blessed John Eudes, the dominant note of his life, was his perfect priestliness. He had a vivid and abiding sense of the dignity of the priesthood and of its corresponding responsibilities. He thought of nothing but God and all that concerned God's interests. The two objects which engrossed his mind and heart, as affecting God's glory most of all, were the evangelizing of the poor and the sanctification of priests. *Pauperes evangelizantur. Tu es sacerdos in æternum.*

The first phase of his public life shows him preaching to the poor; but very soon, even in the midst of his missions, he labours directly for the reformation of the clergy also. There was, unhappily, very urgent need of reformation in all grades of society. Things were in a bad way then in France. Was there ever a time when that could not be said? Certainly it can be said very emphatically at present. But the France of to-day has priests and bishops devoted to their vocation and loyal to the Holy See; and this could not be said so absolutely in the seventeenth century.

It is dangerous, however, to compare century

with century, or even country with country. Distance, whether of time or of place, makes it hard for one to see things as they really are. For instance, many good and well-meaning strangers—and some can remain strangers to those even among whom they have long lived—many such well-disposed persons can form utterly wrong notions of our own good Irish people; and we in turn, no doubt, are often mistaken in our ideas of other nations. Still more when centuries, with all the changes of time and circumstances, intervene. I will not, therefore, attempt the painful task of describing the state of religion and morality in France in the first half of the seventeenth century through the spread of the ugly Calvinistic heresy, the religious wars that had laid France waste for fifty years, the defective training of the clergy, the non-residence of prelates, the corrupting influence of the Court, and the encroachments of the State upon the Church.

Some of these evils were already mitigated at the period we have reached. Let us remind ourselves of a few of the contemporary persons and events in secular history that are more or less closely linked with the subject of our narrative. The deadly struggle with the Huguenots had practically been brought to an end when Henry of Navarre, now Henri Quatre, embraced the Catholic Faith in 1598, twelve years before he was murdered by Ravailiac, and three years before John Eudes was born. During the boyhood of our hero (we may not

yet call him our saint) Mary de Medici was Queen Regent for her son Louis XIII. He became a priest just at the time that Cardinal Richelieu became that king's minister—two years before Bossuet was born and twenty-five before Fénelon. St. Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Mission about the same time that Father Eudes began his glorious missionary work. France had some great and holy sons in those days, and she had sore need of them.

One of the chief means that God made use of to remedy the evils that tarnished His Church in France was that combination of spiritual exercises and influences which we call a Mission. A band of priests who have been trained specially for the holy work come from a distance with an urgent message from Heaven. For many consecutive days or weeks, and more than once each day, they instruct the faithful in the great truths of religion, exhort them to fulfil its obligations, and make it easier for all to approach the tribunal of penance with a special earnestness of purpose to settle finally for the past and to begin with a fresh start in Christian life. The prayers offered up by many for God's blessing on the work, the contagion of good example, the electric thrill of sympathy through a multitude, not merely "two or three gathered together in God's name"—these and many other circumstances that attend a Mission are as it were seized upon by the mercy of God as excuses for working miracles of grace in

thousands of souls. And if this is true even still where a Mission has become a mere blessed commonplace in the spiritual life of a district, much more was it true when it broke in upon the evil tradition of indifference, irreligion, and immorality, as in the days when Father Eudes began his missionary work.

Not that he was the first to employ this mighty instrument of grace. More than two hundred years earlier, St. Vincent Ferrer by his apostolic preaching had wrought prodigies in these districts of France, though his own country was that beautiful but not too happy land in which an unworthy bearer of his name has just now (October, 1909) finished his apostleship of atheism and anarchy by being most justly executed for his share in the cowardly atrocities committed in Barcelona. Blessed John Eudes in the middle of the seventeenth century renewed on a wider scale and in more durable form what St. Vincent Ferrer had done at the beginning of the fifteenth century—nay, what during part of his own time St. John Francis Regis did in the South of France and especially in the Cevennes. The Jesuit saint was born only three years before Father Eudes, but he died forty years before him: for his labours in the rude mountains of the Velay and the Cevennes lasted ten years only, whereas the corresponding period in the life of his great contemporary in the North stretched over half a century.

In 1632, after many years of preparation,

practical and theoretical, of prayer and study and various exercises in the art of moving souls by the spoken word, Father Eudes, still young and vigorous in his thirty-first year, joined the missionary band of Oratorians, who had their headquarters at Caen. His first mission was in the western part of the diocese of Coutances, at Lessay on the seashore. At once he made a profound impression on the people. We have described before some of his physical qualifications for a preacher. These became still more effective according as practice and experience enabled him to speak as "one having authority and not as the scribes and pharisees." He had a high idea of the responsibilities of those who are obliged by their calling to speak in God's name to His people. One who lived with him, M. Finel, tells us that he heard him often say : "If there were only honour in preaching, I should never go into a pulpit. I have no self-love in it : on the contrary, I do violence to myself, and I give myself to it only because I see clearly in it the will of God, whose orders I must not resist."

Towards the end of his fifty years of perpetual preaching Father Eudes wrote a practical treatise on preaching, *Le Prédicateur Apostolique*. His guides are chiefly St. Paul and St. Francis of Sales, to whom his careful editor, Father Dauphin, adds St. Francis Borgia *De Ratione Concionandi*. This treatise is full of common sense and unction, and deals unmercifully with the affectations against which the

Saint of Geneva had already protested so effectively by word and example. "I fear," he had said to Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley, "that your flowers will not bear fruit ; it is time to prune your vineyard and free it from irrelevant ornaments. *Tempus putationis advenit.*" Father Eudes sought to make his disciples rise above such unworthy pettiness by reminding them that the true preachers of the Gospel are "incarnate angels of God, messengers from heaven, heralds of the Most Holy Trinity, trumpets of the Eternal Father, ambassadors of the Word, organs of the Holy Ghost, co-operators with Jesus Christ in the work of the salvation of souls."

He realized his own high ideal. He was a great preacher, for he did not preach himself, but Jesus Christ. They tell us that Bossuet, who at the beginning of his own magnificent career heard him at the end of his, said, after listening to one of Father Eudes' sermons : "That is the way we ought to preach." Huet, the very learned Bishop of Avranches, wrote : "Father Eudes had a natural eloquence, very vehement, more proper to move his hearers by terror than to draw them by sweetness." This last limitation may have held good for the young Oratorian's mission sermons on Death, Judgment, and Hell ; but it was a common saying that if Père Eudes was a lion in the pulpit, he was a lamb in the confessional. There he did not repel, but attracted. After his sermon the people crowded round the con-

fessionals, round his by preference. Many came forty or fifty miles to hear him and then waited many days in the hope of making him hear them in turn.

Another bishop, Monseigneur Philip Cospéan, of Lisieux, writing in his favour to Pope Innocent X, called him "most truly the Apostle of our Normandy," and swore solemnly that he knew nothing "more religious than this most excellent man and his sacred discourses, nothing that with greater force and energy of the Eternal Spirit brought Christ home to the hearts of Christians, whom, in the odour of the ointments of Him Whom he preaches, he draws to himself in such numbers that it is credible to us only who have our eyes for witnesses."

Another testimony to his oratorical power is borne by one who has been named once or twice already. Monseigneur Camus said one day: "I have in the course of my life known many preachers, and I have heard all the best in France and Italy; but I must confess that I have never heard anyone who has touched the heart so deeply as this good Father does."

It is rather ungenerous to follow up this generous praise with a reference to an incident which, however, throws some light on the subject. Father Eudes preached one day on the punishments that fall upon the sinner. After describing the horrors of a miserable eternity in terrific terms, he exclaimed: "Wretched sinners, who will screen you from the wrath of the Eternal? A moment, a single

moment, this moment that is slipping by, may decide your lot for eternity, and you are quite undisturbed. I shudder at the thought. The arm of the Lord is lifted, the thunderbolt is ready to fall. O God ! on which of the sinners who are listening to me will the bolt fall ? Mercy, O Lord, mercy ! It is from the very depths of our hearts that we cry for this infinite mercy. May our cries make themselves heard at the foot of Thy Throne ! I say it for all those who are here present ; they all say it with me : Mercy, O my God, mercy ! ”

The audience was carried away by this appeal and cried aloud with the preacher : “ *Miséricorde, ô mon Dieu, miséricorde !* ”

One of the audience on this occasion seems to have been “ *le célèbre M. Camus, ancien évêque de Belley, un des plus fameux prédicateurs de son temps.* ” At least he heard of the sermon, for he had given up his bishopric and was residing at the time at the Oratory in Caen. As he was “ one of the most famous preachers of his time,” he thought he could produce the same effect. He prepared a powerful sermon on the divine judgements and delivered it with tremendous energy ; but when he arrived at the place where he expected and even invited his hearers to join with him in the cry for mercy, there was a blank silence ; and he was left to finish as best he could.*

* History repeats itself, or at least people are fond of saying so. I remember hearing a somewhat similar *histoire* from Father Daniel Jones, S.J., of holy memory. When he was at school at Prior Park, near Bath, some preacher produced a great effect by

The chief but by no means the only exercise of the sacred oratory of our Beato was called forth by his grand Missions, which stretched over many weeks. "In order that a Mission may work some change in morality," he wrote to Monsignor de la Vieuville, Bishop of Rennes, "and may destroy vice and bad habits, it should last for at least seven or eight weeks. Even in the smallest country parishes we give none that does not last six weeks. Otherwise you cover up the sore but do not heal it; you break through evil customs but do not root them out; you make much noise but gain little fruit." *On fait du bruit, mais peu de fruit.* A clever translator has turned this last phrase too freely: "A passing enthusiasm but no permanent success."

No doubt such remarks as these have their full force only in a state of affairs like that which prevailed in the Church of France at that time. Ordinary Missions are generally, thank God, meant to renew the fervour of a good Catholic population and to welcome back a few wanderers, rather than to be an awakening of the people, a healing of scandals, a holy revolution in the spiritual condition of a parish. Just as with regard to individuals, a retreat, a course of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, is for a man whom God's grace has suddenly struck down in the midst of a life of sin, and

ending his sermon with dramatic abruptness in the middle of a sentence. Some time after, another of the professors ventured on the same device, but with such scanty success that the President sent after him to the sacristy to inquire if he were sick!

who cries out "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" as St. Paul cried out when struck down on the road to Damascus—a retreat for such a man must be very different from the yearly retreat of a good religious. Yet God forbid that we should earn that additional poignancy of fervid contrition by needing it so badly.

Various Popes have assigned certain saints as the special patrons of certain states of life, certain works of charity, etc. Thus quite recently St. Paschal Baylon was appointed Patron of Eucharistic Congresses. I do not know if the work of Home Missions has been thus furnished with a heavenly protector. St. Vincent Ferrer, or St. Vincent de Paul (if that saint of hard work and various charity was not sufficiently engrossed already), or else St. John Francis Regis or St. Alphonsus Liguori or St. Paul of the Cross—any of these would be eligible for the dignity. But the claims of Blessed John Eudes might be urged with great force, even in competition with such mighty names. Yet in the brilliant Essay on Home Missions which Father Faber prefixed to the Lives of Father Segneri and Father Pinamonti the name Eudes occurs only in one sentence, and there it is hidden among a dozen others. In 1850 the great Missionary Apostle of Normandy had not begun to emerge from his hidden life.

For it is only as missionary and preacher that we have considered him hitherto. He continued that work till the end, though the end was long

deferred ; but meanwhile he served God in many other ways. Before we pass on to those other aspects of his character, let us give a few more particulars about his Missions ; and, as we cannot even name the scenes of his labours, let us take his own account of one of them. It was in the year 1641 ; and to fix the period in which he lived better in our memory, to show how far back it is in the past, it is well to remind ourselves how sad a year *that* was in Ireland—1641, the cruelly provoked Rising of the North, miscalled a rebellion. In October of that year Father Eudes wrote to one of his spiritual children : “ I could not tell you the blessings that God gives to this Mission at Vasteville. Certainly it is prodigious. This long time I have given up preaching in the church ; because, though very large, it is too small on this occasion. I can truly say that on Sundays we have more than fifteen thousand persons present. There are twelve confessors ; but without exaggeration fifty would be well employed here. They come from thirty and forty miles, and hearts are greatly moved. There is nothing to be heard but the weeping and groans of the poor penitents, men and women. The fruits that the confessors perceive in the sacred tribunal are marvellous ; but what distresses us is that not a quarter of the people can make their confession. We are all overwhelmed. The confessors see some who have to wait eight days without getting to confession, and who throw themselves on their knees wherever

they meet a priest, begging him with tears to hear them. And yet we have now been here for six weeks. Oh, how great a good a Mission is! How necessary they are! What a terrible evil it is to put obstacles in their way! If those who have hindered us from giving several Missions in this diocese—if they but knew the evil they have done! My very dear brother, let us pray the Master of the harvest to send workers to it, and let us often say with our whole heart, *Domine messis, mitte operarios in messem tuam*. What are they doing at Paris, so many doctors, so many bachelors of arts, while souls are perishing by the thousand for want of persons to stretch a hand to them to draw them from perdition and save them from everlasting fire? Certainly, if I dared, I would go to Paris and cry out in the Sorbonne and the other colleges: ‘Fire! Hell-fire, that consumes all the world! Come, *messieurs les docteurs*; come, *messieurs les bacheliers*; come, *messieurs les abbés*; come, *messieurs les ecclésiastiques*, come and help us to extinguish that fire.’ ”

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER EUDES LEAVES THE ORATORY AND
FOUNDS A NEW CONGREGATION.

FROM the very beginning of his apostolic life Father Eudes had shown such an extraordinary aptitude for not only converting sinners, but for directing the zeal of his fellow-labourers, that Father de Condren, the second General of the Oratory, almost immediately made him the director of all their missionary labours ; and the Archbishop of Rouen, Monseigneur Francis de Harlay, who, as Superior of the Oratory at Caen, had been the first to welcome him as a postulant, made him Prefect of all missionaries in the archdiocese by a formal document (which is dated very significantly, *Anno Missionis Evangelicae 1642, die vero 11^o mensis Januarii.*

Among the places mentioned in what we may call the first series of Father Eudes' missions, there are two names of special interest. In the year 1637 he gave a mission in his native parish, Ri. Father Boulay says he was an exception to the Scriptural saying : " No man is a prophet in his own country." His people received him, if not as a prophet, as an apostle. His parents were still there to receive him, to be proud of him. His father did not die till

1644, and his mother lived still longer. The other place that attracts our notice is Lisieux, which has become interesting for many in our day because the Little Flower of Jesus blossomed there. Probably few of our readers have yet come under the spell of this young Carmelite saint, who is not likely to wait as long as her countryman for the honours of Beatification. Teresa Martin—for she bore that most cosmopolitan of names, which without changing one letter is at home in French, German, English, Spanish, and other languages—Sister Teresa of the Child Jesus was born in 1873, and she died in 1897; and yet a postulator has already been appointed in her cause, and many miracles are said to have been wrought through her intercession.

When Father Eudes had some ten years' experience of this holy work he began to address himself during the missions to the still more important work of the sanctification of the clergy among whom he laboured. *Custodem quis custodiet?* The missionary priest comes from a distance, and passes on after a short stay to other places: on the local priest, who remains always among the people, must greatly depend the permanence of the good effects produced. Our zealous Missioner began, therefore, to assemble once or twice a week the priests of the district where the mission was going on. With all the fervour of his priestly zeal he addressed them on the dignity of their state and its obligations. To these instructions prayers and

meditations were often added ; so that Father Eudes, besides the other institutions that we shall see him establishing, may be looked upon as the originator, or at least the forerunner, of those ecclesiastical retreats which are now recognized as a necessary item in a priest's yearly programme.

These missionary labours were continued with extraordinary fruitfulness till the end of the long life that was now only half way through, although about this time events occurred which would have seemed likely to turn Father Eudes' energies in other directions. One of these events was his appointment as Superior of the Oratory at Caen. Those who knew him best, the Fathers who lived with him, thought that he was the fittest to preside over them, to bear the solicitude which St. Paul tells us is the perquisite of those who govern others. *Qui praeest, in solitudine.* Father de Condren very naturally demurred, fearing that this appointment would take Father Eudes away from the Missions, of which he was the life and soul. For a whole year he resisted the importunities of the Fathers, but at last he yielded to their entreaties in October, 1640. Father de Condren died in the following January, and in May, 1641, Father Bourgoing was elected Superior General.

In the closing years of his life the saintly Father de Condren, perceiving that the Oratory was not fulfilling its original object of founding ecclesiastical seminaries, devoted himself to the

training of some young priests who seemed to have the necessary qualifications for the work. The best known of these was M. Olier, the founder of the Sulpicians, who have ever since done so much for the training of ecclesiastical students. The most important scene of their labours is Canada, where they have long laboured with great success.

The feeling that thus influenced Father de Condren pressed still more urgently upon Father Eudes ; but it found him with a much longer term of life before him, and it carried him much further. He had entered the Oratory in the hope of helping to carry out its design and purpose, which Father de Bérulle had sketched in a manuscript, still preserved in the National Archives at Paris. One of the clauses states expressly that "the training, not of youth (as among the Jesuits) but of priests only, is one of the functions of this Congregation." The aim had been allowed to drop out of sight. The evils arising out of the inadequate preparation for the priesthood were constantly before the eyes of Father Eudes during his missions through Normandy ; and a constant subject of conversation with his brother priests was the best means of devising a remedy for these evils. He elaborated a plan for beginning the work in his own community at Caen ; and having secured, as he hoped, sufficient material help, he sought the approval of his superiors in Paris. He was met by a positive prohibition, which was recognized on both sides as final. This

was the turning point in his career. It was only then that he began to consider with himself whether it was God's will that he should withdraw from the Congregation, since he could not, while remaining a member, undertake a work which appeared to him imperatively necessary for the interests of God's glory and the good of His Church in that time and country.

He had now spent twenty happy, because holy and fruitful, years in the Oratory—six under Cardinal de Bérulle, twelve under Father de Condren, and two under Father Bourgoing. He was to the end of his life grateful and loyal to the memory of his first masters ; but experience, meditation, and prayer had made it more and more clear to him that the work that seemed to be required of him by God might now oblige him to tear himself away from associations that were very dear to him, and in a certain sense to begin life over again. No vows bound him to his present state, of which one of the essential conditions was that it left him free from any such obligations. The Oratorians were not religious, but secular priests. One of the greatest modern glories of the name, Father Faber, prefixes to each volume of the Oratorian Lives of the Saints one or other of two dedications, one to the Regular Clergy of England, the other to the Secular Clergy, linking with each a brilliant little summary of the virtues and merits of their predecessors. To the Life of his own St. Philip, Founder of the Roman Oratory, he prefixes the secular dedication.

Father Eudes took a long time to deliberate. He consulted the distinguished Bishops of Lisieux and of Bayeux (Cospéan and D'Angennes), and also the saintly layman, M. de Renty. They all supported him earnestly in his projects, and gave him ever after all the assistance in their power. Yet even a stronger influence was exerted over him at this crisis by the prayers and counsels of Marie Desvallées, a poor woman of the humblest circumstances, with whom God dealt in very extraordinary ways which cannot be described here. Her name could not be omitted in an account of Father Eudes, who, indeed, wrote her "Life."

Cardinal Richelieu died December 4, 1642. It was in that last year of his life that he sent for Father Eudes, in order to consult him about some of his plans for the benefit of religion in the kingdom. It was only at All Saints, little more than a month before the Cardinal's death, that Father Eudes presented himself at the Palace. He took the opportunity of laying before the great statesman his plans for the establishment of seminaries, and also for another important enterprise which we have not yet introduced to our readers. The result of the interview was that the Cardinal ordered the royal letters patent to be issued for both the proposed institutions, which gave them at once the legal standing so absolutely necessary in the France of that day. These official documents were issued two days before Richelieu's death.

This at least was one good work that the poor man had sent before him.

Bishop Hedley has been followed by Dom Gilbert Higgins, C.R.L., in the *Tablet* (April 24, 1909), and by "An Fear sa Bearna" in *St. Antony's Annals*, in assigning as the cause of Father Eudes' withdrawal from the Oratory his desire to devote himself more completely than ever to the work of the Missions, especially in his native Normandy. We have followed Father Denis Boulay, who has a right to be called the authorized and official biographer of his Blessed Founder.* He attributes Father Eudes' determination to sever his connexion with the Oratory to his desire to devote himself to what he believed to be the paramount object of the Oratory at its foundation, namely, the sanctification of the people through the priesthood, and of the priesthood through proper training in seminaries; whereas, as a fact, the Oratory had some sixty colleges, and its single seminary, St. Magloire, had hardly begun its work.

But, although this is Father Boulay's account of the crisis that we have reached in the history of his Founder, nevertheless (the summary of the nineteenth chapter of his first volume begins with the phrase, "Le Jansénisme, cause de la sortie du P. Eudes." And so) Jansenism really was the cause why he left the Oratory.

* Besides a very elaborate biography in four large volumes, Father Boulay has told his Founder's story in a single octavo of 350 pages, and again in a small volume of a hundred pages.

That undue absorption in the working of colleges in rivalry with the Jesuits, expressly excluded in Father de Bérulle's original design, as fixed in his own words which we have quoted, was one of the evil effects of the influence that the arch-Jansenist, the Abbé de St. Cyran, obtained for a time over the brilliant young Society. He and Jansenius procured the introduction of the Oratorians into Belgium in the hope of a successful rivalry with the hated Jesuits. Letters exist which prove this purpose. Of course the main body of the Oratorians was ignorant of these things, and that most subtle, desolating heresy concealed itself long; but Pasquier Quesnel, whose writings were condemned by the Bull *Unigenitus*, was Superior of the Paris Oratory in his 28th year (1662), and was under the ban of the Church for years before he was expelled from its ranks. The Jansenist blight destroyed to a great extent the work of the holy men whose names we have so often mentioned. The escape of Father Eudes from such dangerous associations was providential, leaving him free for the glorious and permanent good that God meant him to accomplish by the holy institutions that he was to establish in the Church.

Father Eudes made his arrangements for this momentous step so as to begin his new life on the very day that he had joined the Oratory twenty years before. He regarded the 25th of March as one of the holiest days of the year, not only because the mystery of the Incarnation

was accomplished on the feast of the Annunciation, but because he believed that on that day also Jesus finished the work of the Redemption by dying on the Cross. On the eve of that festival he quitted for ever* the beloved community over which he had presided successfully for many years, revered and loved by all his brethren, and by the good people of Caen. Instead of a well-established house and church, he joined in a humble lodging the five priests who were to form the nucleus of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary.†

Father Eudes was now to be the founder of a new Order. In the opening words of this sketch we emphasized the significance of that title. There is one glory attached to it which can only follow his canonization. In the Basilica of St. Peter at Rome there are thirty-nine niches intended for the canonized founders of Religious Orders. The latest of these to be filled has been given to St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria, Founder of the Regular Clerks of St. Paul, commonly called the Barnabites, who was

* It is interesting to note two parallel cases which occurred in the nineteenth century. The Venerable Father Libermann with difficulty and in spite of earnest remonstrances tore himself away from Father Eudes' own Congregation in 1839 in order to found the Congregation of the Heart of Mary, which was soon united with the Society of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, the Venerable Peter Julian Eymard, after eighteen years of devoted service, left the Marist Fathers (Society of Mary), and founded the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament in 1856.

† *Jesus and Mary* was the title of Father Faber's first book of hymns. His first, and perhaps his best work was *All for Jesus*, and here again he unwittingly plagiarised from Father Eudes, who called one of his first writings, *Tout Jesus*.

canonized by Leo XIII in 1897. He has been placed in the second row immediately above the statute of St. Ignatius. Only nine vacant niches remain. No doubt Blessed John Eudes will have one of them, and Blessed Sophia Magdalen Barat another ; for no Salic law prevails here to exclude Foundresses, as will be seen from the following list which is arranged alphabetically. The first of the sainted Founders was St. Dominic, whose statue was put in position in 1706. Then came St. Francis of Assisi and St. Benedict in 1725. The other statues are those of St. Alphonsus Liguori (Redemptorists) ; St. Angelo Merici (Ursulines) ; St. Bonfiglio (Servites) ; St. Bruno (Carthusians) ; St. Camillus de Lellis (Ministers of the Sick) ; St. Elias (Carmelites) ; St. Francis of Paula (Minims) ; St. Francis de Sales (Visitation) ; St. Francis Caracciolo (Regular Minor Clerks) ; St. Frances of Rome (Oblates of Tor de Speechi) ; St. Juliana Falconieri (Third Order of Servites) ; St. Ignatius (Jesuits) ; St. Jerome Emiliani (Somaschians) ; St. John of God (Hospitallers, or Fate-bene Fratelli) ; St. John Baptist de la Salle (Brothers of the Christian Schools) ; St. Joseph Calasanctius (Pious Schools) ; St. Norbert (Premonstratensians) ; St. Paul of the Cross (Passionists) ; St. Philip Neri (Oratorians) ; St. Peter Nolasco (Mercedarians) ; St. Peter Fourier (Canons Regular) ; St. Peter of Alcantara (Alcantarines) ; St. Teresa (Discalced Carmelites and Carmelite Nuns) ; St. Vincent de Paul (Lazarists and

Sisters of Charity) ; and St. William (Congregation of Montevergine).

The Eudist Fathers, however, of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, cannot claim a monopoly in Father Eudes as their Founder. That title belongs to him as father of the four religious organizations which form what his biographer calls *la famille Eudistique*. Our veneration and gratitude are immensely increased when we think of John Eudes as the founder also of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, with its two Observances of the Refuge and of the Good Shepherd. The latter of these will be described hereafter. The fourth organization enrolled under the Eudist banner consists of associates living in the world, like the Third Order of St. Francis. At present we must treat briefly of Father Eudes' personal labours in establishing a congregation of religious women for the protection and sanctification of female penitents—an institution blessedly familiar now, but daringly novel then. "To found an Order of religious women who should vow themselves to take in and reform the fallen members of their sex," says Bishop Hedley, "was a new and bold step in the seventeenth century. There had been Refuges before, but not Refuges directed and worked by nuns. The wise and the easily shocked had a great deal to say ; but Père Eudes persevered."

The inspiration of this work of mercy came to the holy man very early in his missionary career. In the manuscript writings of M. de

Bernières, a pious layman who helped him in his good works, the following note refers to Father Eudes : "September 2nd, 1634, a very zealous Father, full of the love of God, proposed to me a plan which he had long cherished and for which he prays continually, and this is to build and establish a home for penitent women." In 1636 Father Eudes procured for some poor creatures whom he had rescued from a sinful life in Caen a safe shelter in the house of a good woman of humble condition, who chanced to bear the name of the first great penitent—Magdalen Lamy. Of course this lodging was miserably inadequate for such a purpose. One day the worthy matron was standing at her door when Père Eudes passed by in company with M. de Bernières and two other zealous friends, Monsieur and Madame de Camilly. "Where are you going, all of you?" she cried out. "No doubt to the church *pour y manger les images* [to devour the holy pictures and statues with your fervent kisses.] And then you will think yourselves very pious. *Mais ce n'est pas là que gît le lièvre* [you're hunting in the wrong direction.] What you ought to do is to found a house for these poor girls who are going to ruin through poverty and neglect."

This vigorous apostrophe was not without effect. These excellent people put their heads together, and also their purses. M. de Bernières undertook to pay the rent of suitable premises ; M. de Camilly promised forty bushels of wheat ; others engaged to furnish the house, and Madame

de Camilly offered to act as housekeeper and steward for the new community. To Father Eudes fell the harder task of organizing the staff and procuring the necessary faculties from the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

CHAPTER V.

HE FOUNDS THE CONGREGATION OF OUR
LADY OF REFUGE.

OUT of the wonderful speech that Shakespeare has put on the lips of Mark Antony standing beside the corpse of Julius Cæsar the lines that have become most proverbial are those that tell how "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." What a fearful misfortune to leave after one a legacy of evil! How terrible when a work of genius, poem, or romance is of such a nature as to go on corrupting souls year after year for centuries after its wretched author has been judged by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! On the other hand, how blessed a thing to have left any writing or other work that goes on helping many in all the generations of souls that succeed one another in this mortal life! No wonder, for instance, that people by mistake sometimes speak of St. Thomas à Kempis, thinking of all that the *Imitation of Christ* has done for souls these last five hundred years, and is sure to do during all the years the world has still to last.

But this posthumous apostleship, this never-ending legacy of good, belongs chiefly to such

men as he whose story we are telling ; and very probably the most splendid and most enduring of the services that he wrought for his Divine Master was the institution of a Congregation of consecrated spouses of Christ devoted by vow to the salvation of their fallen sisters. His first attempt at organizing this work of zeal, which perhaps began with no such idea but resulted eventually in the foundation of a religious Order of a very novel kind, was made, as we have seen, while he was still an Oratorian and Superior of the Oratory at Caen. After discussing the whole matter with M. de Bernières and his other pious friends, he went to Bayeux, and laid his plans before the Bishop, Monseigneur d'Angennes, explaining fully the resources at his command. One of the most important of these was Margaret Morin, a native of Coutances and a Huguenot, but now for many years resident at Caen, and a very edifying convert. Her character, her experience, and her mature years seemed to qualify her for the post of Superior in the proposed community. The Bishop, who was one of those large-minded men that are always anxious to give to others the opportunity of doing good, gladly gave his blessing to the enterprise.

Returning to Caen, Father Eudes obtained from the Town Council verbal permission to proceed ; and with this amount of civil and ecclesiastical authorization he engaged the friends named above to rent a suitable house. A holy nun of our day used to rejoice at hear-

ing of the opening of a new convent, because this secured a new home for our Eucharistic Lord. And so in this case the first detail recorded for us is that Madame de Chamilly and Madame d'Acqueville prepared an altar in the house in the Rue St. Jean, which was so fortunate as to be the cradle of the new Order. Among those who contributed vestments and other requisites for Holy Mass were the Carmelite Nuns, of whom Father Eudes had been appointed Superior. One of their gifts was a statue of the Blessed Virgin, about two feet and a half in height, which became an object of great devotion. It was jealously guarded during the Revolution, and at present it stands in the Nuns' Choir above the Reverend Mother's stall. In the present persecution, more adroitly managed than that of Nero or of Robespierre, these Religious have escaped so far.

The 25th of November, 1641, Feast of St. Catherine, Virgin and Martyr, was chosen as the memorable date for actually beginning the work of our Lady of the Refuge, for that was the name used at first. On that day a refuge was opened for the penitents whom Magdalen Lamy had lodged and for others gathered from the town, and who were now to be trained and cherished by Margaret Morin and other pious ladies who had joined her. Father Eudes regulated their community life and encouraged them by frequent exhortations; for he knew that he had but a short time to be with them before being called away by his missionary

duties. Accordingly he was absent, we may guess with keen regret, on the 8th of December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, when the Home was formally established and community life was begun. Their founder was occupied elsewhere with his Advent sermons and then by a mission of three months at Rouen, not returning till Easter ; but he did not forget the poor penitents and their good mothers. That excellent lady, Madame de Chamilly, at his entreaty, did all she could for their temporal and spiritual good ; and he himself kept up their courage by frequent letters. He, indeed, belonged to that class which Father Ignatius Grant, S.J., one of the first Oxford converts, said was the most popular among the pious faithful—he was one of the letter-writing saints. One of his sons is employed in editing his correspondence,* which is sure to be full of the most attractive and most instructive wisdom and holiness, as we may judge from a sample belonging to the period that we are now engaged with. During that three months' mission at Rouen just referred to, he had either begun or revived a work somewhat similar to the one he was founding on a permanent basis at Caen. Some months after the conclusion of that mission he sent the pious Rouennaises ladies a letter of counsel and encouragement which fills in Father Boulay's Life four of the largest pages of the smallest type. Towards the end

* In the tenth and eleventh volumes of the fine complete edition of his *Œuvres*.

he says : " When I began this letter, I had no intention of saying so much to you, but I believe that God has willed it so." It is indeed a wise and holy letter. In an earlier letter to the same " Dames de la Miséricorde," just after returning from his missions, he had said : " All is going on very well, thanks be to God, in the house of our Lady of the Refuge, and I assure you that I received particular consolation when, on my return to Caen, I went to see what was doing there ; for I found that God was greatly glorified by the good order that is kept there, and by the great care taken to establish those poor women firmly in the fear of God and in piety and to make them employ their time well. Yet there are only three persons in Caen, and these not very rich, who support this house. Show, I beseech you, my dear sisters, that, as you have more power about temporal means than these people of Caen, you have also more charity."

Till June of that year (1642) Father Eudes was able to remain at Caen, and to watch assiduously over the young community, saying Mass in their little parlour-chapel, and encouraging them with short exhortations—he whom the saintly M. Olier called about this time " le grand predicateur, la rareté de notre siècle," the very *rareness* of the expression making it more emphatic than the more usual way of saying in French " the wonder of our age." The man of God was greatly consoled and gladdened by the triumphs of grace that

he saw in these poor souls that were rescued from sin and misery.

But the wicked spirits both of the other world and of this were enraged at seeing their victims snatched from them and placed in a safe shelter. Opposition rose up on all sides. Excellent people urged the objection that had been urged against a similar effort of St. Ignatius a hundred years before. "These poor creatures will soon fall back into their evil ways, and all your labours will be in vain." "Even to hinder a single sin from being committed," St. Ignatius answered, "one sin less on one night in the year, would be a sufficient reward for all my trouble." So, too, Father Eudes granted the difficulty of the task, but answered that he would not grudge all this pains to draw even one soul from the abyss of impurity. All depended on God. The commission given to the Apostles was not, "Go, convert all nations," but "Go, teach all nations." Man might plant and water; only God could give increase. He hoped that this was God's work, and God could carry it through.

In the passage quoted from his letter to the good ladies of Rouen, Father Eudes said that the House of Refuge depended for its support on three persons. The chief of these was M. de Bernières; but he soon withdrew his support. A holy friend of mine once told me that, no matter how it might be with dead saints, he had discovered that living saints have corns, and if you tread upon their corns, they wince. Perhaps this worthy layman's particular corn was his skill

as an amateur spiritual director. He had placed in the community a young lady of good family, Mademoiselle Dieudonné ; but evidently Marguérite Morin did not think that an appropriate name for the new recruit. The ill-feeling between them rose to such a pitch that, in spite of many attempts at reconciliation, Mademoiselle Dieudonné left the little community. Whether this was the reason or not, it is too certain that about this time M. de Bernières withdrew the little subsidy he had hitherto given, and the community found it still harder to get the means of living. We must not, however, part with M. de Bernières on these terms. In the seventeen years that still remained for him before his happy but sudden death, he continued his devoted friendship for Father Eudes and his fierce hatred for the Jansenists. Like Father Eudes himself, he was a member of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin in the Jesuit Church, and he had attended a meeting of the Sodality a few hours before he died without a moment's warning. Better still, he had received Holy Communion that morning, for he was a daily communicant. In one of his works he had written, just about the time that Blessed Margaret Mary was born : " Let us go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We shall find in It a remedy for all our ills, light in darkness, strength in our weakness, and in our troubles peace above all understanding."

But this holy and happy death was seventeen years later than the stage that we have reached

—the early troubles of the house of Our Lady of Refuge. As very often happens, God allowed some of the contradictions which undertakings of the sort generally encounter to come from very worthy and well-meaning people. There were not the proper elements of stability, they thought, about the work. The royal letters-patent had not been obtained, and without this legal authorization everything was insecure.

Father Eudes stood firm against all opponents within and without ; for even Margaret Morin wavered in her faith. Disheartened by the difficulties that she and her companions met with in the management of the penitents, she proposed to Father Eudes to modify or rather to abandon his first design, and to receive into the Refuge the *nouvelles Catholiques*, young women who had been converted from Calvinism. This proposal the Father rejected firmly, especially after Marie des Vallées had assured him that the work he had begun was willed by God ; but he felt the force of the other objection, and he determined to obtain letters-patent from the King.

We have retraced our steps a little in order to chronicle the first beginnings of the Order of Our Lady of Charity ; for an earlier page has told how Father Eudes was summoned to Paris by Cardinal Richelieu, and how he had availed himself of his interview with the great man to lay before him his plans for the establishment of seminaries, and also (we added) “another important enterprise which we have not yet

introduced to our readers." Now, however, we have done so, for this second project was no other than the opening of an asylum for penitent females under the care of a religious community, such as was at this time struggling with faint-hearted friends and loud-voiced foes.

The mighty Cardinal, who was to die in a month, entered so heartily into the holy priest's projects that the royal letters-patent were duly issued both for the Seminary Priests of Jesus and Mary and for the House of Our Lady of Refuge. This expeditious fulfilment of his double petition might well seem providential under all the circumstances, especially when we remember the many delays and weary formalities to which official documents of this nature are liable.

But the letters-patent of Louis XIII did not smooth away all the difficulties of the daughters of Our Lady of Refuge. Poverty pressed upon them very hard. Father Eudes begged assiduously for them when at home, and on his missions he bore them constantly in mind. Better than any alms, he won for his new foundation some noble souls. A young lady of noble birth, Mademoiselle de Saint André, took literally our Lord's words: "Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor:" she sold her lands for sixteen thousand livres, which she gave, along with herself, to the poor penitents and their foster-sisters at Caen. Another well-born maiden, Renée de Taillefer, made the same sacrifice. One of her sisters, and two other

girls, went with her to Our Lady of Refuge. These five, with Mary Herson, a niece of the founder, only as old as St. Agnes (thirteen years), formed the first batch of postulants, *spes gregis*, the hope of the rising Congregation. It is to be supposed that they had stood the test he proposed in another case: "I beg you to study this young person well in order to see if she is resolved to renounce her own will entirely, if she has zeal for the salvation of souls, if she has a naturally good spirit, if she is sound in body, for one would never be able to say how important it is to be on your guard about the persons whom you receive and to examine and test them carefully. Above all, we must beware of admitting any who have the spirit of the world, the spirit of pride and vanity."

The holy founder was wise in insisting on the renouncement of self-will. She who might have claimed the glory of being co-foundress failed under this test herself. It is a sad enough story, and I should be loth to tell it if the authorized biographer of our Beato had not published all the details, according to the domestic records and accepted traditions of the Order. Very virtuous people can sometimes act very strangely and harshly towards others through mistaken notions. Margaret Morin acted thus persistently for months towards the newcomer, Mademoiselle de Saint André. Unfortunately Father Eudes was preaching and evangelizing at a distance. When he returned to Caen he found that his promising postulant

Postu

had departed. It is pleasant to record that she carried such feelings away with her as made her give 3,700 livres for the support of the penitents several years later.

The sister of Mademoiselle de Taillefer also left, and the two who had come with her withdrew with her. Worse still, Margaret Morin took up an attitude of opposition and independence, and wished to regulate things according to her own ideas. She proposed to introduce the Ursuline rule, whereas Father Eudes preferred the spirit of the Visitation Order. It ended in the departure of Mademoiselle Morin and her colleagues, leaving the poor penitents alone with Mademoiselle de Taillefer and the founder's little niece, Marie Herson.

It may not be recorded, perhaps, in the dignified histories of that wonderful man, but a story is told of Napoleon Bonaparte that once in the forenoon of one of his dreadful battles he lay writhing on the floor of his tent from the effects of an ill-cooked beefsteak at breakfast. Meanwhile his troops were faring very badly in the field; but at noon he recovered and said: "We have lost one battle, but there is time still to win another." At once the fortunes of the day changed, and night closed on a complete victory. Father Eudes acted in a similar spirit when he saw his darling work seemingly ruined. He refused to accept defeat. He began anew on a somewhat different plan, and placed his work on a permanent basis, which still, as we shall see, sustains it in full vigour.

Experience had convinced the great servant of God that such an institute as he still felt himself called to found could only become stable by being confided to religious sisters guarded by vows and bound by perpetual enclosure. A hundred years later the poet Gresset was to write playfully :—

Les petits soins, les attentions fines,
Sont nés, dit-on, chez les Visitandines—

but Father Eudes felt that *chez les Visitandines* the Daughters of his Refuge would best learn the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, which was the spirit he considered best adapted to the human guardian angels of penitents. The Visitation Nuns would form to religious life the novices who would present themselves until these would be able to choose from among themselves one qualified to govern them. ✓

With great reluctance and many misgivings the good Bishop of Bayeux, Mgr. d'Angennes, allowed the Daughters of the Visitation to lend their help ; and on the 10th of August, 1644, Mother Frances Patin relieved Renée Eustache de Taillefer at the post she had held so bravely at this crisis, helped by that excellent lady, Madame de Chamilly. Mère Patin brought with her Mary Charlotte de la Rue and Elizabeth Angela le Comte, along with two hundred livres, the generous gift of the Visitation Monastery. When she was chosen for this difficult duty, she was Mistress of Novices in her own convent after she had ceased to be

Mother Superior. She was a woman of great prudence and holiness. No doubt she must have desired to bestow the religious habit at once upon Renée de Taillefer, who had shown such great qualities and was not yet even a novice ; but her probation was continued some months longer till she had learned certain usages of religious life : for the first novice of the new Order that was now at last really going to be established ought to be a model to all who soon would follow her. She received the habit and the name of Sister Mary of the Assumption on the 12th of February, 1645. After a fervent novitiate, of which the prominent trait was prompt and cheerful obedience, she became the first professed nun of the Order of Our Lady of Charity, first-born of many sisters, eldest daughter of a mighty family that has ever since spent itself, and will for ever spend itself, in helping fallen daughters of Eve whom the Son of Mary calls to repentance.

A minute history of the Order would be interesting and edifying. Here can be given only a few particulars that concern also its founder. Many troubles befell it, even after it had been duly organized. It lost a kind and powerful friend in Mgr. d'Angennes, who died May 16, 1647, aged seventy-three years, after forty-one years' episcopacy. In January, 1645, he had addressed a petition to the Holy See in its favour, but the objections of the Roman authorities were not overcome in his time. He himself was unable on his death-bed to sign an

approbation that he had authorized. His successor as Bishop of Bayeux, Mgr. Molé, did not share his esteem for Father Eudes, against whom he had conceived violent prejudices, of which we shall see the causes and consequences hereafter.

Another misfortune for the infant community was the withdrawal of Mother Patin. Her own Sisters of the Visitation at Caen elected her as their Superior, May 30, 1647. Mère de St. Germain took her place at the Refuge, but did not fill it. With all her good will she was unequal to the difficulties of the very trying position, and the fact that is remembered out of her short reign, is that she let herself be robbed of five hundred livres by two promising candidates for the novitiate, and this when the community were hardly able to supply the necessities of life. Mère Patin called her home, and put in her place Mother Margaret de Foy, who managed fairly till 1649, when the Sisters of the Visitation went back to their own convent, being afraid that the disfavour of the new Bishop might fall on their Order also if they continued their connection with the poor, struggling Refuge. Mgr. Molé was a holy Bishop, and he grounded his long delay on the insufficient guarantee* for the stability of the Institution. After he had held out sternly against all appeals, he suddenly yielded and gave his formal approbation to the Convent of

* M. de Langrie's ten thousand livres had been raised from other sources to fifteen thousand.

Our Lady of Charity, February 15, 1651. The Bishop was then in Paris, where too many of the Bishops in those times had the habit of living. Père Eudes was there also, preaching one of his great missions at St. Sulpice. ✓ He wrote to his very dear daughters :

Here is a great piece of news that I have for you. Put yourselves on your knees to receive it, not from me but from our adorable Jesus and His most holy Mother who give it to you. At last, after many years of waiting and patience, last Wednesday, eighth day of February,* feast of the Most Holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin, the letters of your establishment have been signed by His Lordship the Bishop of Bayeux, and the foundation contract has also been signed by him and by M. and Madame de Langrie. So now you are daughters of the Queen of Heaven, and you are bound to honour and love specially her most amiable Heart and to celebrate its feast with very particular devotion, to have only one heart with her and with one another, and to exhibit in your hearts a perfect image of the love, charity, obedience, humility, meekness, zeal for the salvation of souls and all the other virtues which reign in her Heart, in order that by this means you may be according to the Heart of her Son. Fear nothing any more : your community and institute are founded upon the most sacred Heart of the sovereign Empress of the Universe. And this has been done, not by the industry of men but by the particular order of Heaven. Eternal thanks be rendered for it to the Most Holy Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ, to His most precious Mother, and to all the angels and saints who have contributed to it. And blessed be for ever with the holiest benedictions of Heaven all those [*tous ceux et celles*] who have contributed to it in any way whatsoever.

For thanksgiving, I am of opinion, my very dear daughters, that you should do what follows : to recite

* February 15, the date mentioned above, is the date of the Bishop's letter to the Nuns.

every day for a week, all of you together, the *Te Deum*, the *Ave*, *Cor Sanctissimum*, and each day one of the eight Litanies of the most holy Heart of the Blessed Virgin at the end of the book on Devotion to this same Heart, and, after the prayer of the Heart, to say the prayers of St. Joseph, that of St. Gabriel, that of the holy Guardian Angels, and that of all the saints as it is said on All Saints Day. Besides this, to make thirty-four Communion, at your convenience, in thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity, to Jesus, to the most holy Heart of His glorious Mother, to the Angels and Saints, for the Bishop of Bayeux, for your founders and benefactors, and for all those [*tous ceux et celles*] who have contributed to your work. Moreover, it seems to me that you ought to write four letters of thanks : the first, to the Bishop of Bayeux ; the second, to M. le Président de Langrie ; the third, to Madame la Présidente ; the fourth, to Madame de la Porte, to whom you are under great obligations. I beg our dear Sister of St. Francis to write these four letters. Above all, I implore you to begin now in good earnest to live as true daughters of the most holy Heart of the Mother of God. It is in the sacred love of that Heart that I am and will be eternally, my very dear daughters, all yours,

JOHN EUDES, *Missionary Priest.*

It has seemed expedient to give this letter in full as an example of the care which saints (like St. Ignatius) take to show their gratitude to benefactors. Mark how a grateful letter is to be sent, not only to the President of the Parliament of Rouen, but also separately to his wife. *Tous ceux et celles.* This distinction of sex cannot be marked here in English even as well as in St. Augustine's famous question, *Numquid ego non potero quod isti et istae ?*—"Can not *I* do what these have done, youths and maidens ?"

One is astonished to hear that Sister de Taillefer, who had shown such solid virtue, had still to wait fifteen months for her profession. Mother Pâtin had meanwhile finished her term of office in the Visitation Convent. Father Eudes succeeded in overcoming great reluctance on her part and the part of her Sisters, and secured her for the training of the many promising postulants that now took shelter under the mantle of Our Lady of Charity. ✓ She probably had no idea that she was to give the remaining eighteen years of her life to this work. The chief event of those years was the Bull of Pope Alexander VII erecting the Order according to the Rule of St. Augustine, issued on the 2nd of January, 1666. This was the fruit of extraordinary prayers, austerities, embassies, negotiations, and untiring exertions of all kinds, kept up for twenty years. At the last it was greatly due to the efforts of the famous Abbot of La Trappe, de Rancé, and of Cardinal de Retz.

When Mother Patin died the death of a saint in her sixty-eighth year, eve of All Saints, 1668, M. Le Grand, the Superior of the Community—for the founder had been deprived of that beloved charge—asked the Sisters if they wished to receive a new Mother Superior from the Visitation Order. All answered Yes, except a junior professed Sister, Mary Angela Balde, twenty-two years old, who thought it would serve better for the progress and stability of the Congregation if they chose a Superior from



amongst those whom Mother Patin had trained so long and well. This opinion finally prevailed. The Visitation Nuns at once withdrew for ever, even Mère Patin's niece, Anne Margaret Foy, who had spent sixteen years with them, and whom they were anxious to retain as a help to whatever Superior they might elect. They waited till December 22, when Mademoiselle Pierre (Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament) was elected. No doubt at the next recreation allusions were made to the great text: "Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre," etc. This first Superior of their own, after two successful terms of three years, was succeeded, in May, 1675, by Sister Mary of the Nativity (Herson), who had only returned three months before from presiding with full success over a community at Bayeux. She it was, you remember, who had begun her remote probation at twelve years of age. Many things had happened since then.

It is impossible to record the development of the Order, which established itself at Rennes, Vannes, Tours, La Rochelle, Paris, and other places. Most of these struggled on, half by stealth, through the Revolution, and were speedily re-established or founded anew at Caen, Paris, Versailles, Tours, La Rochelle, Saint Brieuc, Nantes, Lyons, Valence, Toulouse, Blois, Marseilles, Besançon, Le Mans, and Valognes. The nineteenth century also saw Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge doing her blessed work at High Park, Drumcondra, near

Dublin, and later in Gloucester Street, in Dublin. There are in England houses at Bartestree in Hereford, Birmingham, Mold, Monmouth, and Waterlooville, in Hampshire. Austria, Spain, and Italy have convents at Salzburg, Bilbao, and Loretto. Canada has them in Ottawa, Toronto, and New Westminster, and the United States at Buffalo, Alleghany, and Green Bay. The latest of these seems to be at Dallas in Texas. The Mother Superior of the Monastery of Toulouse, which sent forth this last swarm, writes these words, which we are glad to end with: "We rejoice to have been able, in this year of the Beatification of our beloved founder (1909), to contribute to the extension of his religious family, to give one tabernacle more to our Divine Master, and open a new asylum to souls that are so dear to Him."

Donner un tabernacle de plus à notre divin Maître—the very same feeling as the Irish Sister of Mercy (Mother Mary Emmanuel) whom we quoted, without naming her, at the opening of the first chapel of Our Lady of Refuge.*

* The Life of this Irish Nun will soon be published, along with the Life of her sister, Mother Mary Baptist Russell, of San Francisco, which was published some years ago at New York, but has for some years been out of print.

CHAPTER VI.

EUPHRASIA PELLETIER AND THE NUNS OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD.

IN the enumeration of the convents of Our Lady of Refuge that survived the French Revolution or were founded in the nineteenth century, no mention was made of Angers, because Angers has a history of its own which may now be told very briefly before we go back to the personal history of Father Eudes.

The convent at Angers was a colony from Tours, and the leader of the colonists was Mother Euphrasia Pelletier.

Things looked dark in France when Rose Virginia Pelletier was born on July 31 (Feast of St. Ignatius), 1796. No churches were open and no bells were rung in those days, and the daughter of Dr. Pelletier and Anne Mourain, his wife, was baptized in secret. Her birth-place was the little island of Noirmoutier, near the north-western corner of La Vendée, at the mouth of the river Loire, to which her father had brought his family, as being more inaccessible than towns on the mainland and less exposed to the excesses of the Revolution. We are told that her early familiarity with the Atlantic lent a peculiar vividness to the spiritual illustrations

she was fond of borrowing from the seas and winds and waves. Her father was dead when she was sent for her education to Tours in her fourteenth year ; and she lost her mother three years later.

In Tours there was a convent already of Our Lady of Refuge, doing its holy work cautiously after the Revolution ; but it was not very flourishing and not at all attractive exteriorly. Yet this ardent young girl felt drawn to it in spite of the opposition of her uncle, who was her guardian, and in spite of the influence of her dearest friend, who wished her to become an Ursuline, as she had done herself. The guardian yielded at last on condition that her profession should not take place till she was twenty-one years of age. Accordingly, in her nineteenth year, on the Feast of the Nativity of our Blessed Lady, September 8, 1815, she took the veil in the community of Our Lady of Charity at Tours, receiving the name of Sister Euphrasia. She had asked for that of St. Teresa, whose life she had read with great delight, but the Mother Superior told her that the name of a glorious saint like Teresa did not suit so insignificant a creature as she, and bade her seek a more obscure saint in the calendar. The order was not very rigidly enforced, for it would have been easy to discover a much less amiable and less attractive patron than the little Eastern maiden whose short career is sketched very pleasingly by Alban Butler under the date March 13.

The young Nun never relaxed her first

fervour, and she showed such judgment and ability that as soon as possible various important charges in the community were entrusted to her. In 1825 Mother Botmillian's second triennial term of office was completed. The Rule forbade a third term ; but it also forbade the election of a Superior under forty years of age. The Council of Trent required thirty years. Sister Mary of St. Euphrasia was only twenty-nine, yet she was considered necessary at this moment. A dispensation was obtained, and she was canonically elected May 21, 1825.

The blessing of God manifestly rested on the labours of the young Superior. She received a larger number of penitents ; and soon after she established the Order of Magdalens, with subjects chosen from among the penitents desiring to dedicate their lives to God, with Sister Mary Magdalen as their patron saint. When she consulted the Superior of the Paris Refuge upon this project she received no better encouragement than this : "If you have no crosses and wish to have some, by all means go on and found your Order of Magdalens." She persevered, and called in the aid of the great saint whose name she had coveted at the beginning of her religious life. The Carmelites lent their books, their rule, and their habit ; and amongst those who took an interest in the Magdalens was M. Dupont, who was called the Holy Man of Tours, the propagator of the devotion to the Holy Face of our Divine Lord.

In the year that in English and Irish history

is linked with Catholic Emancipation, 1829, the Tours convent sent out a colony to Angers. The Bishop, Mgr. Montaut, had long wished to open a home for penitents. Madame de Neuville had left for this object a large bequest, which her son greatly increased, ultimately giving most of his fortune to the convent. The clergy of the city, especially M. Breton, were eager to begin the work. A charitable lady of Angers, Madame d'Andigné de Villequier, was consulted. She was intimate with Mother Euphrasia's predecessor at Tours, and she recommended M. Breton to apply there for help. The young Mother Superior was delighted at the prospect of such an extension of the field of their labours, and succeeded in overcoming the hesitation of her timorous council, who thought that another revolution was imminent, and that it was no time for such enterprises. On the 1st of June five of the religious were chosen for the new foundation; and Mother Euphrasia was allowed to accompany them, with express injunctions in writing from the Vicars-General (the Archbishop of Tours was in Rome) to return to her post at Tours as soon as possible.

The little band took up their quarters in Tournemine, an old cotton factory in a very tumbled-down condition. They soon transformed it, beginning of course with a suitable dwelling for our Eucharistic Lord. From the first the house was called by the beautiful name that it was destined to spread so widely over

the earth—*le Bon Pasteur*, “the Good Shepherd.” The name was popular in Anjou, and it had been borne previously by a community which had been destroyed by the Revolution.

Having put the young community in some sort of order and established enclosure on July 31, 1829—her thirty-third birthday and the Feast of St. Ignatius—Mother Pelletier was obliged to return to Tours, where she was still Superior. But God meant her to be at Angers, and after thirteen months she returned as Superior, the Archbishop of Tours having in a formal document resigned his jurisdiction over her without any restriction as to time.

The chief helpers in the great works that she was to do were Madame d’Andigné, who soon made her home in the convent without becoming a religious, and M. de Neuville. He had been a pupil of the Jesuits at Liège when their college was broken up and they had to go to England, where Mr. Thomas Weld gave them Stonyhurst. The French lad accompanied the Fathers, and was thus one of the first eleven Stonyhurst boys. Two of Mr. Weld’s granddaughters became Good Shepherd nuns. M. de Neuville devoted his whole life and fortune to piety and works of charity. Very many of Mother Euphrasia’s undertakings would have been utterly impossible but for the unfailing support of this saintly layman.

Almost immediately she took charge of the Children of Providence, and formed a little community of Magdalens. These were, of

course, kept distinct from the Refuge and the convent, and in all these separate departments Mother Euphrasia established and maintained perfect order and efficiency. But she "sighed for more worlds to conquer," or rather she longed to conquer the world and make it subject to God. She longed at least to spread as widely as possible the help that her holy institute afforded to poor sinful souls; and she became convinced that these purposes would be greatly promoted by an important modification in the constitution of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity.

The Monasteries of Our Lady of Refuge, according to the organization given to them by their Blessed Founder, are independent of one another. In 1891 there were 31 of these, of which eighteen were in France, one in Italy, one in Spain, one in Austria, two in Ireland, two in England, three in the United States, and three in Canada; and it was calculated that these convents contained 1,512 religious and novices, 1,043 Magdalens, 2,119 penitents, and 1,824 girls of the preservation classes. In England and elsewhere new convents have been established, and the most recent census that I have seen makes the number of convents to be 42, with about two thousand religious.

The corresponding statistics of the Good Shepherd offshoot of this Congregation, which will be given presently, are very different from what might have been conjectured by one who was acquainted with the results in an almost

parallel case in Ireland. Ireland is proud of her Sisters of Charity and her Sisters of Mercy. By the former I do not mean the daughters of St. Vincent de Paul who later made their way into Ireland and are doing glorious work there in Dublin, Drogheda, and Cork. The Irish Sisters of Charity are of Irish growth, founded by Mary Aikenhead of Cork in the year 1815. After another fifteen years, Catherine M'Auley founded the Sisters of Mercy, with almost the same objects, and differing in little else except that the Sisters of Charity in their new foundations remain dependent on the mother house under the jurisdiction of the Mother Superior-General, whereas each fully-established convent of the Sisters of Mercy is independent, like the convents of Our Lady of Refuge, as originally founded by Blessed John Eudes. In the case of the Sisters of Mercy this circumstance has been considered one of the causes of the amazingly rapid spread of their Order in every diocese of Ireland, and also in England, Australia, and America; and yet, on the other hand, the opposite policy, the centralization of authority, which this newest Irish Congregation dispensed with, the establishment of unity of government under one Superior-General, seems to have promoted marvellously in the Order of the Good Shepherd the development which it might rather have been expected to retard. This success is a proof that Mother Euphrasia acted under the impulse of a divine inspiration.

It was not to be expected, however, that all

should see this from the first. The Foundress of the Order of the Good Shepherd (to thrust on her a title that she disclaimed) had her full share of trials and crosses. *Sic itur ad astra*. Three of the six religious who had come with her from Tours were opposed to the project of the Generalship, and went back to the mother-house. The Bishop of Angers was a firm supporter of the new undertaking, and drew up accordingly the conditions on which a foundation was sent to Le Mans. But after a short time the new community repudiated these conditions and claimed its independence. The first permanent foundations from Angers were Grenoble, Poitiers, and Metz.

The most formidable opponents of Mother Euphrasia's designs were the bishops of several towns in which convents of Our Lady of Refuge were established. These considered themselves aggrieved, though the new plan regarded only the branches that might be sent forth from Angers. The Archbishop of Tours came in person to claim Mother Euphrasia as his subject; but his letter was brought forth, transferring her to Angers without any limit and resigning all claim upon her.

Cardinal Odescalchi was at that time Cardinal Vicar at Rome. He soon after resigned all his dignities and entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus, in which he died in the odour of sanctity. To him Mother Euphrasia sent a full account of her designs and wishes. He sent her an encouraging reply and promised to sup-

port the petition which her bishop should send to the Pope. Mgr. Montaut was eighty-four years of age, but he had the consolation of seeing this good work accomplished before his summons came. In spite of the opposition of thirteen bishops, headed by the Archbishop of Tours, the decree approving of the *Généralat* to be established at Angers was signed by Pope Gregory XVI in February, 1835.

Year by year since then convent after convent of the Good Shepherd has been founded in all parts of the world—nearly forty in France, one in Rome itself, many in Germany and other European countries. The Atlantic was crossed in 1843, and convents founded at Louisville, Montreal, St. Louis, Philadelphia, etc. The Hammersmith convent in London dates as far back as 1840, and Glasgow to 1851. Limerick comes between these two in 1848, the year that is for many linked with the memory of Thomas Francis Meagher and John Mitchel. The precursor of the Sisters in Limerick was Miss Reddan. This pious lady, who had charge for twenty years of a House of Refuge in Limerick, felt called to the religious life, but her bishop, Dr. Ryan, told her she could not leave her holy work. Luckily she had become acquainted with the Good Shepherd convent at Hammersmith, and conceived the idea of handing over her home to religious of that Order. The Bishop approved. Mother General accepted the offer with eagerness, for (says her French biographer) “she loved Ireland—Ireland which

was afterwards to give so many vocations to the Good Shepherd ; Ireland which, poor as it is, sends out thousands of missionaries and largely contributes to the extension of the Catholic religion."

Miss Reddan stayed with the Sisters to help them through their first difficulties, and then became a novice among the Sisters of Mercy at Kinsale. In 1854 she volunteered to be one of the band that began the work of mercy at San Francisco, which they entered on the very day the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed in Rome.

The first Superior of the Bon Pasteur at Limerick was Sister Mary of the Visitation (Smyth), but she was soon recalled on account of her health, and her place was taken by one who is still affectionately remembered by some as Madame de Baligand, a large-hearted, large-minded woman, who ruled her big family with quiet firmness. This house has flourished greatly, and is now the residence of the Mother Provincial and the Novitiate of the Province. Other houses of the Order are well established in Cork, New Ross, Waterford, and Belfast.

The last of these Irish foundations was almost the last sent forth by the holy Foundress. It took place within a few months of her death. On Whit Sunday, 1867, she was in the midst of her community in the hour of afternoon recreation—a duty to which she most wisely attached great importance. "I have joyful news to tell you," she said. "But first answer

three questions : Do you love souls ? Do you love the Institute ? Do you love new foundations ? ” We may be sure that each of the three questions evoked a loud chorus of “ *Oui, oui, ma Mère.* ” The great news given as their reward was that Dr. Dorrian, the Bishop of Down and Connor, had asked them to take charge of a Magdalen Asylum at Belfast, to relieve the Sisters of Mercy, who were greatly overworked. “ It was destined, like the other Irish foundations,” adds Monseigneur Pasquier, “ to give the servant of God many consolations. The staunch faith of the Irish and their zeal for the salvation of souls made them welcome with grateful piety the work of the Good Shepherd,”

Though it is hard to believe it when one thinks of the enormous labours she went through during so many years, Mother Euphrasia had never been robust. In the beginning of 1868 it was plain that the end was drawing near. The unselfish Mother postponed, as it were, the formal opening of her last sickness till her feast-day should be over, in order not to cloud the gaiety of her children or cheat them out of the happiness of presenting her with all the little presents and tokens of affection which they had long been preparing. On that day, March 13, 1868, feast of St. Euphrasia, Mother Euphrasia was present for the last time in the refectory at the community dinner. She lingered on in much suffering, but with her mind as clear as ever, giving the sweetest edification

to all who had the coveted privilege of being near her.

In the cell in which *la bonne Mère* lay dying, someone pitied her because she could take no other drink than water. "St. Francis Xavier," she rejoined, smiling, "had not as good at Sancian." A curious and touching *rapprochement* this between two death-beds so far apart in space and time—if indeed Xavier's can be called a death-bed, since, like his Divine Master, he "had not whereon to lay his head." And so, linking together the close of one life and the opening of the other, these two tiny specks off the far-sundered shores of the Pacific and the Atlantic, the little islands of Sancian and Noirmoutier, which else would not have been heard of, are consecrated now for ever as the ocean-grave and the ocean-cradle of two heroic souls with few things in common except the vehemence of their zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of poor sinful souls for whom Jesus died.

Mother Euphrasia Pelletier went to her reward on the 24th of April, 1868, in the seventy-second year of her age and the fifty-first of her religious profession. The cause of her canonization has been introduced, and she was declared Venerable on the 11th of December, 1897.

There are more than 250 Houses of the Good Shepherd at present, and the number of religious exceeds considerably five thousand. The persecution in France has so far left the

vast mother-house at Angers and its many branches undisturbed.

When the Venerable Euphrasia Pelletier is canonized, she will take a high place among those letter-writing saints—Jerome, Bernard, Xavier, Francis de Sales, Teresa, and the rest—among whom we have already ranked her Blessed Founder, from whose story she has distracted us too long. She kept her branch houses well supplied with long, affectionate, news-telling and news-begging letters, especially during the initial difficulties of the various foundations. She entered into everyone's troubles, had a kind and thoughtful message for everyone.

As we must next turn back to the seventeenth century and speak of Father Eudes' other works—for all the work we have been narrating was his also : he has a founder's share, an author's royalty in it all—we may end our tribute to the Good Shepherd and to Our Lady of Refuge (for the elder and the younger Congregations have all in common) with a passage from a lecture of Archbishop Glennon, of St. Louis, on "The Lights of Home":

"The infinite pathos of a lost soul—the soul of one who sinks a victim when she might be a saint! Would you take her into your comfortable, respectable homes? Oh, no! Your houses are not reform schools, and least of all for such as they. You have your good names to guard. The women who of all others are most charitable are sometimes, by the very exigency of

the case, compelled to let pass the enemy—for such they must regard the unconverted Magdalen. And yet for such there is one door open: for such there is one hand offered in helping kindness, with no rod to scourge, no threat to make—a hand not from out the darkness to drag down to sin, but a hand set in light to lift up and save. There is, I say, just one to offer it, who in doing so fears not the censure of the Pharisee nor the criticism of the world, but who from out the very soul of the Church itself, white-robed and immaculate, can stoop down to where there is sin and weakness and shame and death; and who, remaining still white-robed and immaculate, can draw back to home and hope and happiness those who otherwise were broken and crushed for ever.

“Need I say that I refer to the white-robed Sister who bears the title that the Good Shepherd gives to those who follow Him, and who, as a Sister of the Good Shepherd, will help to guard and defend the flock of Christ? And this in itself is a proof of the intrinsic holiness and goodness of the Church—that, on the one hand, it can ask in consecration the souls of those who serve as Sisters of the Good Shepherd, and lead and guard them in the way of purity and goodness and holiest living, and arm them with a shield of immaculate armour. It tells them that, while cultivating those virtues, they shall go out as the Good Shepherd went after the lost sheep of the House of Israel; and, remaining untainted themselves, bring

back the tainted ones who have fallen by the way : bring them back in all kindness and mercy and forgiveness, and give them home and hope, and the heritage that awaits those who will follow them in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd."*

* It is very unlikely that any reader's memory will go back to a sketch of Madame Pelletier in the English *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, May, 1869. But, lest this should happen, it is well to remark that it is lawful for a writer to plagiarise from himself.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

WE are telling the story of a man who lived through the first eighty years of the seventeenth century ; and yet, when we are only half-way through that long span, we have allowed ourselves to look forward to our own time—to Hammersmith in London, to High Park in Dublin, to Limerick, Glasgow, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Yes, because Blessed John Eudes' beneficent and apostolic life did not end with the seventeenth century : it has been continued ever since in the lives of his spiritual sons and daughters, and it will be continued as long as the earth continues to be a place of probation for human souls. We have glanced rapidly over the labours of the two Sisterhoods that venerate him as their Father and Founder.

We now take up again the thread of his own personal story. We had followed it down to the year 1643, when, on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, he and the five whom he had chosen to be his fellow-workers began the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. For wise reasons he did not take any of these from the Oratory, though he might easily have done so. These first five were Simon Mannoury, Thomas

Manchon, Peter Jourdain, Andrew Godefrey, and John Fossey. The last two did not persevere, and their places were taken by James Finel and Richard Le Mesle, who joined in the first year.

The members of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary write after their signatures the three letters C.J.M., initials of that word "Congregation" and those holy names. They seldom, however, get their official title, which does not lend itself to any convenient contraction like "Passionist" or "Redemptorist," and so, like Dominicans, Franciscans and Vincentians, they are generally called after their founder, Eudists, the Eudist Fathers. But even the full title of the Congregation was in the mind of Blessed Eudes the contraction of a fuller title: for we are told by Father Blouet de Chamilly, the Founder's immediate successor as second General of the Society, that Blessed Eudes wished his Congregation to be called from the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary under whose protection he had placed it.

It is right to dwell upon this point, for it brings out one of the brightest glories of our Beato. He was an apostle and evangelist of the Devotion of Devotions which a cloistered nun at the end of that century was to make better known in the Church than it ever was known before. For it was not unknown. Father H. Noldin, S.J., says: "It may be asserted with perfect justice that the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus dates from the

foundation of the Church ; for its theological basis rests upon the principal and most well-known truths of our holy faith, and the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord was from the outset venerated and adored."

The first adorer of the Sacred Heart was the Blessed Mother herself. The first line of Father Faber's hymn to St. John the Evangelist calls him "Saint of the Sacred Heart." With him Divine Love carried into reality the fancy of human love, making him "rather feel than see the beatings of His Heart." Long afterwards St. Gertrude in one of her ecstasies asked St. John why he had not explained for the good of the Church all the beatings of the Heart of Jesus, having himself drunk them in from their source as he leaned on the bosom of Our Lord ; and this favoured Apostle of the Sacred Heart replied to the holy Virgin that the full persuasive sweetness of that Divine Heart was reserved to be revealed at a later time when the world should have grown old and be sunk in tepidity, that it might thus be rekindled and reawakened to the love of God.

St. Gertrude was one of the many saints who, like St. Bernard, uses language about the Sacred Heart as tender as any prayer that has ever been addressed to It in the convent chapel of Paray le Monial. St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen was martyred in 1622, just a quarter of a century before the birth of Margaret Mary Alacoque ; and of him we are told that he cherished through life a great devotion to the Sacred Heart, to

which he consecrated himself by the following prayer : " O most sweet Heart of Jesus, I give unto Thee, Who art the source of all good, my heart with all its affections ; I present to Thee all my sins and faults, that they may be blotted out by Thy most Precious Blood. But particularly, O Jesus, I ask of Thee that in the dreadful hour of my death I may find a sure resting-place in the wound of Thy adorable Heart."

Here is another interesting anticipation of the special devotion which is linked with the name of Blessed Margaret Mary, and for which Ireland has shown an earnest predilection. In 1642, five years before Margaret Mary's birth, the Anglo-Irish Catholics of the Pale formed (too late and for too brief a period) a league with the native Irish under Owen Roe O'Neill in defence of the Catholic faith and the Royal cause. This was called the Confederation of Kilkenny. This Supreme Council of the Catholics of Ireland caused a seal to be made that was to be attached to all their official documents, representing a heart with flames issuing from it and a cross rising above it.*

More fully than any other before the wonderful revelation, in which Jesus said, " Behold this Heart, so loving and so little loved ! " Father Eudes entered into the spirit of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart ; but this, instead of lessening, increases the glory of

* This familiar symbol is on the cover of Father C. P. Meehan's *Confederation of Kilkenny*. He wrote in answer to my enquiry : " I am quite sure that the heart on the Confederate seal represents the Sanctissimum Cor Jesu."

Blessed Margaret Mary. Not he with his marvellous powers of sacred eloquence, and with his devoted disciples to second his efforts, and with his wide influence already acquired over priests and people—not he, but a timid, cloistered nun in an obscure village was chosen to inaugurate that mighty development of the devotion to the Heart of our Divine Redeemer as the living symbol of His Love, which has ever since been so marvellously blessed by God—never and nowhere more marvellously than in our own day and in our own country.

In the development of this devotion Father Eudes followed the usual order, *Per Mariam ad Jesum*, "Through Mary to Jesus." From the dawn of his spiritual life he cherished a chivalrous allegiance to the Queen of Heaven, and he soon learned to dwell lovingly in his prayers and sermons and writings on the tenderness and holiness of her Immaculate Heart. The greatest, perhaps, and certainly the longest of his works, has for its theme and its name, "*Le Cœur Admirable de la très sacrée Mère de Dieu, ou la Dévotion au très Saint Cœur de la Bienheureuse Vierge Marie.*" This has just been reprinted, very carefully edited and annotated, in the very admirable edition of his complete works with which the filial piety of his sons has enriched the ascetic literature of the Church. In this series it fills three large volumes (sixth, seventh, and eighth), containing between them eighteen hundred ample pages, full of solid learning and the most

ardent piety ; full also of holy prayers like this :—

“O Jesus, only Son of God, Who hast willed to be the only Son of Mary, and to place us in the rank of her children and Thy brothers, make us sharers, we beseech Thee, in the love that Thou bearest to her, as also in the love that she bears to Thee, in order that we may love Jesus with Mary’s heart and that we may love Mary with the Heart of Jesus, and that we may have only one heart and one love with Jesus and Mary.”

This treatise on *The Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God* was the crowning work of Father Eudes’ life. He died two months after finishing it, and it was not published till the following year.

He had not, however, waited so long to proclaim his allegiance to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Father Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., a distinguished Belgian theologian of our day, in his *Meditations and Instructions on the Blessed Virgin*, of which an excellent translation has recently been made by Mr. Humphrey Page,* tells us that the first public demonstration in honour of the Most Pure Heart of Mary took place at the close of a mission given in the cathedral of Autun, on February 8, 1648. The initiative was taken by Father Eudes, Founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, commonly known as the Eudists ; and by permission of the Papal Legate, Cardinal

* Published by R. & T. Washbourne, Paternoster Row, London.

de Vendôme, a feast of the Heart of Mary was celebrated for the first time in the Congregation on February 8, 1668. Father Eudes himself drew up the Office, which is full of impressive eloquence."

As Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque was born on the 22nd of July, 1647, and as she lived not far from Autun, some writer has supposed it to be quite possible that, as an infant in her mother's arms, she may have had an unconscious part in that first feast of the Heart of Mary, February 8, 1648. She certainly kept that feast afterwards on that day. It did not escape notice that it was on the 8th of February, 1651, that Monseigneur Molé, Bishop of Bayeux, unexpectedly gave up his opposition and signed the authorization of the Institute of Our Lady of Charity.

Blessed Eudes called his own Congregation by the two sacred names of Jesus and Mary; and he begins one of his devotional treatises by applying to them our Lord's famous word, "Whom God has joined, let no man sunder." He sometimes purposely used the expression in the singular, "The Holy Heart of Jesus and Mary," urging that they were morally one. The twelfth book of *Le Cœur Admirable* is concerned exclusively with the Heart of Jesus, and with its 170 large and compact pages it forms a complete treatise on the devotion. This part of Blessed Eudes' work on earth is referred to very emphatically by His Holiness Pius X in the Bull of his Beatification,

where he says that "the holy man's merits and services to the Church received a large accession when he, burning with a singular love for the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, was the first to think, not without a divine inspiration, of offering to them liturgical worship." *Ad Joannis in Ecclesiam merita cumulus accessit, quum ipse, singulari ergo sanctissima Iesu et Mariae corda flagrans amore, de liturgico eis cultu praestando, non sine aliquo divino afflatu, primus cogitavit.* The Holy Father goes on to call Father Eudes the doctor and the apostle of this *suavissima religio*; and elsewhere (in the Decree dated January 6, 1903) he receives the glorious title of *auctor cultus liturgici sacrorum Cordium*, "the institutor of the liturgical worship of the Sacred Hearts."

Two hundred years later, one of his spiritual daughters, Mary Droste zu Vischering, in Religion Mother Mary of the Divine Heart, Prioress of the Convent of the Good Shepherd, Oporto, was employed by her Divine Spouse to induce Leo XIII to crown his long and glorious pontificate by consecrating not the Catholic Church only, but the whole world, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She died on the 8th of June, 1899, the day before the universal consecration took place. As the assurance of it was one of the last joys of her suffering life on earth, did its accomplishment add another thrill of rapture to the first joys of her heaven?

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS WRITINGS.

CARDINAL VIVES, one of the Princes of the Church now assisting the Sovereign Pontiff, has written : " I have studied the life and works of Venerable John Eudes. I greatly admire him. He may be ranked among the great lights of the Church. His spiritual doctrine is of wonderful depth and solidity." And the Sovereign Pontiff himself, in the Bull of Beatification which has already been quoted, expresses astonishment that in the midst of so many engrossing labours, founding and governing more than one religious institute, and preaching the word of God to the people incessantly with such power and effect, the holy man notwithstanding found time to compose so many admirable books.

He must have made, or at least he acted as if he had made, St. Alphonsus Liguori's vow not to waste a moment of time. The distractions of our day did not assail him, and such as may have come in his way he thrust firmly aside. What full days he must have lived ! He did not waste time over the daily newspaper. His was a long life, counting merely the years : but how much more spacious was

one of *his* years than twelve months of an ordinary lifetime !

The wonder that one feels at the immense mass of the printed works of St. Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, and others is excited in a very special degree by the number and nature of the writings of Father Eudes, who, nevertheless, would seem to be absorbed in external works of another sort. This wonder is expressed, as we have already said, even in the Bull of his Beatification, where it refers to his *multa et praeclara scripta, insignem redolentia pietatem*.

Of these "many illustrious writings redolent of a singular piety," the longest was the last, at which we have just cast a superficial glance ; but one of his most recent biographers, M. Joly, says : " His chief work, although it is (or perhaps because it is) his first work, is *Le Royaume de Jesus*." Its full title is, *The Life and Reign of Jesus in Christian Souls*. It was published in 1637, and has been doing its blessed work almost ever since ; for it was reprinted many times, and even after the terrible French Revolution it started on a new career of usefulness. But this cannot be said of most of the other writings of Father Eudes. Some of them were preserved only in manuscript, and in the chaos of the Revolution they perished utterly. But since the twentieth century began the sons of our *Beato* have conspired in a magnificent act of filial piety in bringing out a complete edition of their Father's works, seeking for them in public and private

libraries, collating and annotating them, verifying quotations with most laborious perseverance, and expending on their publication much toil and much money. Ten of these fine volumes have appeared since 1905; and two more volumes will complete the series. No nobler monument could be raised to the memory of this Apostle of Normandy.

We have purposely given him a name which indicates one of the causes why Blessed Eudes remained so long in comparative obscurity. He did not make Paris his headquarters. Any man distinguishing himself in Paris might catch the eye of the world; but could anything remarkable come out of Caen? Father Eudes confined his exertions almost exclusively to his own country. Even his books were all printed and published at Caen. There is much significance in the fact that his title-pages from 1636 to 1668 bear the same imprint, "Caen, Poisson"; and even after his death two of his books are published in 1681 and 1685 by a son of the same Poisson.

There is no doubt that, as a spiritual writer, Father Eudes can justly be accused of diffuseness. Most of the old writers are obnoxious to that charge. They did not like to take their spirituality in snippets. They considered their holy themes to be the most interesting and the most important that could be discussed, and they were in no hurry to be rid of them and to get on to something else. They were not distracted by the thousand new things that are

obtruded on one's notice nowadays by all the newspapers and telephones and telegrams that go so far to annihilate time and space and make us present in a hundred places at once.

In the second volume are several short treatises and collections of meditations, such as those on Humility, which are a development of the prayer that he sought his children to say every morning: *Domine Jesu Christe, nihil sumus, nihil possumus, nihil valemus, nihil habemus praeter peccatum. Servi inutiles sumus, natura filii irae, novissimi virorum, et primi peccatorum. Nobis igitur confusio et ignominia, tibi autem honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Domine Jesu Christe, miserere nobis.* "O Lord Jesus Christ, we are nothing, we can do nothing, we are worth nothing, we have nothing except sin. We are useless servants, born children of wrath, last of men and first of sinners. To us, therefore, be confusion and shame, but to Thee glory and honour for ever and ever. Have mercy on us, O Lord Jesus Christ."

It is claimed for Father Eudes that he was the first to introduce several good things that are now quite customary. For instance, his nuns were the first to put the name of our Blessed Lady before that of the patron of their religious life. This was certainly not done among the Visitation nuns, on whom they were to a certain extent modelled. So, too, it is asserted that he was at least among the first to apply the catechetical system of question and answer to an exposition of Christian doctrine.

Courses of catechetical instruction were an important feature of his great missions. The last 135 pages of the third volume of his works contain *La Vie du Chrétien, ou le Catechisme de la Mission*. This Mission Catechism was one of his first publications, and it went through many large editions in his lifetime. It is full of learning and piety, and "children of a longer growth" might study it with great profit.

In 1654 Father Eudes published *Man's Contract with God in Holy Baptism*, to which two doctors of theology give a warm approval; but a third, M. Grandin, went no further than this statement: "J'ai lu un livre intitulé *Contrat de l'Homme avec Dieu*." Not another word. Strange that he should say no more after turning over pages so full of fervour, especially the closing "protestations containing the dispositions necessary for dying a good death." Here is one of them: "O Jesus, Thou art the Life and life eternal; and yet Thou hast willed to die for love of me. I adore Thee in the last day, the last hour, the last moment of Thy life. I adore Thy last thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings. I adore the last use that Thou didst make of all the faculties of Thy soul and of Thy body. I adore Thee in Thy agony, in Thy death, and in Thy burial. I offer up and consecrate to Thee my last day, my last hour, my last moment, my last thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings, my last use of the powers of my soul and of the senses of my body, my agony, my last sigh, my death and

my burial, in honour of, and in thanksgiving for, these same things which took place in Thee. O good Jesus, I give myself to Thee with all my heart in order to enter into the holy dispositions with which Thou and Thy most worthy Mother died, and Thy holy martyrs and all Thy other saints; protesting that I desire that my last sigh may be an act of pure love for thee. Amen."

Not only his last sigh, but every breath he drew might well seem to be an act of love for God. Outside the sanctification of his own soul he thought of nothing but the advancement of God's glory through the sanctification of the priesthood and the evangelization of the people. His third tome of five hundred ample pages is all for priests; and so also are the four hundred and forty-two pages of volume four. These two volumes in particular would be a precious addition to any ecclesiastical library. *Le Memorial de la Vie Ecclesiastique* no doubt borrowed its name from *The Memorial of a Christian Life*, by Father Lewis, of Grenada, which was a favourite with Father Eudes, and which in a Dublin translation is given—or at least was given sixty years ago—to each Maynooth student when he began his course in that really *grand seminaire*. This fine spiritual treatise is followed by two very practical treatises on two great works of the ministry, preaching and hearing confessions. *Le Prédicateur Apostolique* and *Le Bon Confesseur* were compiled in his later years, and give the fruit of

his long experience as preacher and confessor.

The next volume of five hundred octavo pages is devoted to the Childhood of Mary—*L'Enfance Admirable de la très sainte Mère de Dieu*. The approbations of the old censors in all these volumes—for in this scholarly and admirable edition all these are carefully reproduced—confine themselves for the most part to a dry statement that the books contain nothing contrary to faith and morals ; but the censor of this book goes much further and finds in it the fruit of “studies very pious and very curious, with a style so ardent and so efficacious in drawing hearts to a singular devotion towards the most holy Virgin, Mother of God, that I am persuaded that his readers will pronounce the author of this treatise is entirely consecrated to the service of Jesus and His Mother, and consumed with the desire to make them be loved and served.”

The next three volumes we have already referred to. The ninth gives at full length the rules and constitutions of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary ; and the tenth does the same for the Congregation of Our Lady of Refuge. Two other volumes, of which the most interesting part will give his letters, will complete the *opera omnia* of the Blessed John Eudes.

CHAPTER IX.

TRIALS AND TOILS TILL DEATH.

I AM not sure that it was a friend and not rather an enemy who composed the following couplet :

Non est ex praeordinatis
Qui non amicus est Societatis.

This mark of predestination, if such it be, belonged unmistakably to the Founder of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. All his life he was a devoted friend of the Society of Jesus. In the acts of thanksgiving that occur often in his writings he always reckons among the choicest graces of his youth that he was educated by the Jesuits. In his instructions to the clergy, when he recommends certain books of ascetic or moral theology, there are sure to be several by Jesuit authors.* In his great work, *Le Cœur Admirable de la très Sacrée Mère de Dieu*, he describes the third chapter of Book III as containing "twelve Apostles of the divine Heart of the glorious Virgin through whom the Holy Ghost preaches to us the zeal and devotion that we ought to have for this Admirable Heart." Who are these twelve Apostles of our

* See, for instance, page 30 of the fourth volume of his *Oeuvres*, edited so admirably by Père Dauphin, C.J.M.

Immaculate Mother? All Jesuits: Suarez, Orosius, Canisius, St. Jure, Barradius, Nieremberg, Binet, Poiré, Paul Barry, De Vega, Nicquet, and Cornelius à Lapide. To each of these Blessed John Eudes devotes some pages, beginning with this emphatic statement: "Among all the religious Orders that are in Holy Church there is none that employs itself with more zeal and ardour for the service and honour of the Queen of Heaven than the illustrious Society of Jesus."

There were two strong bonds of union between the Society of Jesus and the young Congregation of Jesus and Mary: devotion to the Heart of Jesus, as we have seen, and the bitter enmity of the Jansenists, as we shall now see.

Probably no heresy ever wrought such ruin among souls as the subtle and plausible heresy of Jansenism. The miseries of the Church of France to-day can be traced to Jansenism as one of the chief causes. Bishop Bellord* calls it "a specious and insidious heresy which sapped the moral life under the pretence of austerity." He adds that "it enjoined a severity which made Christian living seem unattainable; it alienated the faithful from Holy Communion and left them a prey to temptation; resting on some refined distinctions concerning the recondite operations of grace, it cast the responsibility for men's sins upon God, and dispensed

* In his admirable sketch of *Monsieur Olier*, published by the Catholic Truth Society.

them from all efforts after virtue and holiness." When Fénelon wrote in 1705 that the Jesuits and Sulpicians were the only communities that remained absolutely free from the taint of this heresy, he must have exaggerated; for were there not the sons of Blessed John Eudes and of St. Vincent de Paul?

The latter of these is the only modern saint that Father Faber has sung, except, of course, his own beloved Father, St. Philip, to whom he dedicates nine poems. Many of the things he says of St. Vincent hold good of Blessed John; for instance, the tenth stanza:

So, for the sake of timid souls,
And love of winning ways,
Thou didst against hard-hearted schools
Thy gentle protest raise.

For the hard-hearted heresy that taught that Jesus had not died for all, and that looked upon Him as judge rather than as Saviour, there could be nothing but repulsion in the tender heart that made constantly this act of love: "O Jesus, all worthy of love and all to be desired! kindle in my soul so burning a thirst and so keen a hunger for Thy holy love that it may be for me a continual martyrdom not to love Thee enough, and that nothing may be able any longer to afflict me in this world except loving Thee too little."

The Jansenist faction, and some who without knowing it were unhappily influenced by the Jansenist spirit, pursued our holy priest relentlessly with calumnies of all sorts, and strove to

extinguish his young Congregation. The personal insults offered to himself he met with absolute silence ; but he laboured earnestly to secure the permanence of the ecclesiastical body through which he hoped to work for souls centuries after he was gone from this world. For this purpose it was expedient to obtain the formal approbation of the Holy See.

In the beginning of the year 1645 he renewed his efforts, when a petition in favour of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, or the Seminary Priests, as well as for the female Congregation of Our Lady of Refuge, was addressed to Pope Innocent X by Monseigneur d'Angennes, Bishop of Bayeux. Rome showed its usual prudent slowness and deliberateness, so that at the end of that year Father Mannoury was sent to the Eternal City to endeavour to obtain a favourable answer to the petition. The journey was made on foot, like the pilgrimage to the same city which has been described so graphically in a famous book of our time.* The finances of the two communities that he represented were too limited to provide Father Mannoury with means for any more luxurious mode of travelling.

At Rome the agents of the Jansenists of Holland, and the French Oratorians, who had a house in Rome since the year 1618, opposed M. Mannoury's mission by every means and influence in their power ; and they succeeded so well that nothing had been done before the

* *The Path to Rome*, by Hilaire Belloc.

death of the Bishop of Bayeux in May, 1647 ; and then the Roman officials declared that nothing could be done while the See was vacant.

The adversaries of Père Eudes took fresh heart from the death of the holy bishop who had befriended him. The Chapter of Bayeux withdrew his faculties for doing priestly work in the diocese. He submitted humbly, and in order not to increase the ill-feeling by remaining on the spot, he and his priests accepted an invitation to give missions in the neighbouring diocese of Chartres. This honourable exile had been arranged for them through the influence of the Baron de Renty, a saintly layman who is a prominent figure in the religious history of the time.

The appointment of a new bishop did not end the holy man's trouble. When Cardinal Mazarin selected M. Molé for the See of Bayeux, Père Eudes hastened to Paris to offer his allegiance, but his enemies had been beforehand and had filled the mind of the prelate with prejudices that were never dispelled. Even Blessed John himself might have been grievously tempted to despair if God had not the year before given to him and his young Congregation two earnest protectors in Léonor de Matignon, Bishop of Lisieux, and Claude Auvry, Bishop of Coutances. These adjacent dioceses afforded them a field for their zeal while they were doomed to inaction in Caen and all the diocese of Bayeux.

It was about this time also, in the year 1651, that the great mission was given in Paris in the parish of St. Sulpice. In the first months of 1910 the world was shocked at the terrible floods in Paris caused by the rising of the Seine. That was not the first calamity of the sort. An overflow of the Seine made it impossible for Father Eudes and his missionaries to cross over to St. Sulpice in time to open this mission. The saintly M. Olier had to take his place, and he began thus: "I should have need of the light of the great servant of God whose place I occupy to speak to you worthily of Jesus Christ and true light. This apostolic man has an altogether extraordinary gift for converting hearts, and we are confident that at so favourable a time, when Jubilee and Lent are joined together, God will work for us through him grace and mercy."

Strange that the man of whom the holy Curé of St. Sulpice could speak thus from a Paris pulpit should almost be excommunicated at Caen. It was in this same year, 1651, that the opposition to Father Eudes and his pious projects reached its height. The Bishop, M. Molé, was a man of worth and virtue, and if he had lived at Bayeux or Caen he might have come to see how things really were and might have risen above his prejudices. But before he took possession of his See he was appointed Treasurer of the Sainte Chapelle, and continued to reside in Paris, where he was surrounded by Jansenists, who at that period had great influ-

ence, especially in the Faubourg St. Germain. His health was feeble, and appeals and remonstrances addressed to him on behalf of the Eudist Fathers served only to irritate him and strengthen his feeling against them. He went so far as to lay the chapel of the Seminary at Caen under an interdict. No Mass or religious function was to be celebrated there. This state of desolation lasted two years. Father Eudes submitted without a word of complaint after making the formal protest that was due to his community. Among those who consoled him with their sympathy in this difficult crisis was the friend of St. Francis de Sales, Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley, who told Father Eudes that he ought to rejoice at seeing his undertakings marked with the seal of the Cross, for that is the seal of the chancery of Heaven.

M. Molé died in April, 1652, aged only forty-three years. His brother succeeded him in the bishopric, and one of his first acts, even before receiving his bulls from Rome, was to repair the late Bishop's injustice and to take steps for the removal of the interdict. A brighter era seemed to dawn for the struggling institute on that 10th of May, 1653, which Father Eudes tells us in his *Memorial of God's benefits* was the feast of our Lord's Apparition to His Blessed Mother after His Resurrection, "a day of great consolation and of extraordinary joy for us and all our friends." And then he repeats the *Regina Cæli*, adding five Alleluias at the end of it.

But the new prelate, who had begun his episcopate so well, suddenly resigned it; and priests and people were again plunged in uncertainty. What if the Bishop now to be appointed continued the fatal tradition of absenteeism?—for even M. d'Angennes had sojourned too long in his priory of Moutiers outside his diocese, and his successor, M. Molé, had lived in Paris. For a long time no episcopal visitation had been made of the various parishes, and this after wars and dissensions had thrown all things into disorder, and when the Sacrament of Confirmation was more than ever necessary.

These considerations prompted Father Eudes to appeal personally to the Queen Mother, the widow of Louis XIII, Anne of Austria. After consulting with some zealous friends, he ventured to send this letter to her:

MADAM,

Having learned that M. l'Abbé de Sainte Croix has resolved not to let himself be consecrated Bishop of Bayeux, I should consider myself extremely guilty if I did not follow the counsel that several great servants of God have given me to represent to your Majesty that from time immemorial no visitation has been made by the bishop in the diocese of Bayeux; that this neglect has caused greater disorders and profanations than the passing of many armies of the enemies of the Christian name would have done; and that this voluntary resignation of so considerable a benefice seems meant to impress upon your Majesty that a thing so extraordinary in those miserable days of corruption, when people do not scruple to renounce the benefice of eternity in order to get or to keep a much smaller one than the bishopric of Bayeux, has been brought about by God for no other

purpose than to furnish your Majesty with an opportunity of doing justice to the Blood of His Son who, by shedding It all, has acquired the dominion and ownership of the souls of all this diocese on a much better and incomparably juster title than those who purchase slaves with money, over whom nevertheless they have absolute dominion.

These considerations, Madam, without comparison more important than those by which the greatest monarchies of the universe are maintained, demand from your Majesty a saint as bishop of this diocese. You are obliged by the Council of Trent, under pain of mortal sin, to name for all benefices to which the care of souls is attached not only none but those whom your Majesty deems worthy of such a charge, that is, holy men, but even the most worthy, that is, the most holy. Still more, Madam, are you obliged to this for a diocese so desolate as that of which I am speaking, of which the wants are greater than I can represent to your Majesty. The knowledge that I have of these wants through the frequent Missions that I have had the happiness of giving in many places and through the sighs and groans with which many souls full of zeal for the glory of God have, during a long course of years, bewailed so deplorable a state of things—this knowledge, joined to the ardent desire that I feel to see falling on this state and on your Majesty's sacred person as many blessings as the just anger of Heaven seems to be preparing for us of evils, has given me courage to throw myself at your Majesty's feet, in the name of all the people of this diocese, although the least and most unworthy among them, in order to try to obtain from your goodness the grant of a petition so important for the glory of God, so necessary for the salvation of the souls for whom He delivered His own Son to death and to the death of the Cross, and so sure to heap all sorts of prosperity upon your Majesty and upon the sacred person of our incomparable Monarch, that admirable God-given one, while making reparation for the injuries offered to the divine glory in this diocese.

I beseech the divine goodness, which will one day be

your portion, to pour out upon your Majesty the plentitude of graces necessary to conduct you to your heavenly country.

JOHN EUDES.

Notre incomparable Monarque, cet admirable Dieudonné. It is hard for us to realize the feelings with which Frenchmen looked upon Louis Quatorze, *le Grand Monarque*, who at this time had fifty years of glory and adulation before him. All the more zeal and courage were needed to address such a warning as this to the King's mother, the Queen Regent during his long minority.

Was this appeal efficacious? Francis Servien, the Bishop that was sent to them, was a holy man, and carried out the reforms that had been begun by M. d'Angennes. But God allowed him to try severely the virtue of the holiest of his subjects. Those who were around him before he came to take possession of his See and the Chapter of his episcopal town when he came to reside there, were bitterly hostile to Père Eudes, and succeeded in filling the mind of the new Bishop with prejudices against him. He tried in vain to remove these impressions in a personal interview and through his friends. All was of no avail. M. Servien even thought of closing Father Eudes' chapel again, and of handing his seminary over to the Oratorians.

Meanwhile the holy man kept his soul in peace. It was at this time that he wrote thus to one of his priests :

With all my heart I thank our most adorable Jesus

and His most love-worthy Mother for the cross that they are pleased to give us. That is the only treasure of earth, the supreme good of the true children of Jesus and Mary, the source of all benediction, the glory and crown, the love and delight of true Christians. I speak according to the spirit, and not according to the senses. Let us adore them, very dear brother; let us bless, praise, glorify and love with our whole heart the most lovable will of our good God, Who disposes all things in the best manner and Who knows well how to draw His glory, even from sin, which is the greatest of all evils.

He then thinks of the designs against his beloved seminary, and gives a new reading to Psalm cxxvi.: "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." On the other hand (he adds), unless the Lord Himself destroy the house, they labour in vain who wish to destroy it. "It is not with us that those who thwart us have to deal: it is with the King and Queen of heaven and earth, who will know well how to frustrate all their designs when the time comes. Meanwhile on our part we must do all that we can for our Master's business, and remain in peace, not forgetting, above all, to pray well for those whom God is pleased to make use of to chastise us. We must pray for them as our benefactors."

The Bishop ultimately relented so far as to abandon the idea of taking the seminary of Caen from its founder, to whom it had cost so much toil and anxiety. But he persisted in rejecting the entreaties of the Religious of Notre Dame de Charité who wished to have their venerable founder as their spiritual father and superior, as he had been from the begin-

ning. This office was given to M. Le Grand, an excellent parish priest in the city, who filled the office well for more than twenty years.

These changes did not please M. de Langrie, the temporal founder of the convent, who threatened to withdraw his support. Father Eudes refers to this in a letter to Father Manoury :

I am very sorry for M. de Langrie's displeasure, but what can be done? If I gave way to my feelings, I also might have great reason for giving up all concern for this house. But we must forget ourselves, and look only to our Lord and His Holy Mother, and do all for love of them. God permits all things out of goodness towards us, in order to guard us from self-complacency and vanity, which, perhaps, would make us lose all the fruit of our labour.

Even after the good Bishop came to know and esteem Father Eudes, he did not reinstate him in the position of director of the institute which he had founded. The saintly man—with difficulty I refrain from calling him “saint”—submitted loyally and cheerfully, though this hampered him in regulating the last details of the constitutions that he drew up for his religious sisters.

Bishop Servien's prejudices were dissipated before many months. Perhaps his secretary, M. Larderat, had some share in the merit of the reconciliation. Perhaps it was partly due to the prayers of the holy woman, whom we have named before, Marie des Vallées. She died on the 25th February, 1656, and on the 6th of March Père Eudes began, at the

Bishop's request, a mission at Langevres, which was near enough to Bayeux to be reported minutely to his Lordship. The favourable reports and his own reflections during a sleepless night convinced the prelate that he had been deceived about the great missionary. After Father Eudes had returned to Caen, the Bishop presented himself at the seminary and publicly begged pardon for his conduct towards him. During the rest of his short episcopate of four years and a half he used Father Eudes' services to sanctify his diocese, in which he wrought a blessed change. He died in February, 1659, aged 61 years, soon after having formally authorized the celebration of the feast of the most Holy Heart of Mary, for which Father Eudes had drawn up a Mass and Office.

Father Eudes, who was only a year or two younger, had still nearly a score of years of hard work before him. His trials, persecutions and slanders were not over yet; nor were his great missions. They continued till the very end of his long life. These, and the foundation of seminaries at Rouen—the first after the original one at Caen—at Coutances, Lisieux, Evreux and Rennes, were the chief external works of his last years. His years indeed were made up of full days.

It would be edifying, but it is impossible, to enter into the details that are given of these missions. The mere names of the places in which they were given have, no doubt, an interest for French readers; but in this sketch

we must be content with a general view of his labours, reminding ourselves of his contemporary reputation as one of the most powerful preachers of the Word of God, "one of the prodigies of the age," as M. Olier called him. Though he was to earn the title of Apostle of Normandy, and tried to confine his work to his native province, he was forced more than once to give missions in Paris, where the Queen and the fastidious grandees of the Court heard him with admiration. All through he was animated by the feeling which he expresses in one of his letters :

I feel in myself so strong an inclination to work for the salvation of souls that I would willingly renounce all the glory of Paradise and would, without difficulty, quit heaven, if I were there, in order to return to earth for the purpose of helping in the salvation of one poor soul. The taking of a city is looked on as a brave and brilliant deed for the commander of the besieging army. But what is that? Heads broken, blood poured out, walls beaten down. To drive out of a soul sin, which is the enemy of God, to restore it to the possession and obedience of Him who is its true King and lawful Sovereign—*this* is to win a victory far more complete, and this is the crowning glory of a Christian soldier.

In this spirit Father Eudes continued his labours till the end. And till the end also, in spite of merits so transcendent, acknowledged by the highest and holiest, his enemies continued to thwart his projects and to heap calumnies upon him. To these machinations it was due that, though the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity was approved by a Bull of Alexander VII in the year 1666, after twenty

years' endeavour this formal authorization was still refused to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. One of the agents whom Father Eudes employed at Rome in this business, M. Boniface, compromised him very seriously by over-zeal. Wishing to secure some return for the very great expense which this mission to Rome put upon the Eudist Fathers, M. Boniface, in the year 1662, presented a petition in their name to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, in which it was suggested that, as a barrier against the heretical opinions that were creeping in in many countries, the members of this Congregation were ready to add to their obligations a vow binding them to uphold all opinions and doctrines tending to favour the authority of the Holy See, even if they were doubtful. This was met at the time with a summary *Sanctissimus abnuvit*,* and the document was laid aside in the Roman Archives. Twelve years later it was found by enemies of our Beato, who took measures to bring it under the notice of Louis XIV as an attack on the pretensions of the Gallican Church and the French King. It had the desired effect.

Just before this time, in 1671, Father Eudes stood so high in the favour of his sovereign that there was question of appointing him Coadjutor to the Bishop of Evreux. In 1674, though he made a formal declaration that he had had no part in M. Boniface's petition, he fell under Louis' deep displeasure, and its con-

* His Holiness refuses his consent.

sequences were such that he wrote to a friend : " Since I came into this world I have never suffered so bloody a persecution as this." The famous Minister, Colbert, sent him a formal order to quit Paris ; and it was not till 1679 that he was received by the King, who said to him : " I am very glad. They have spoken to me about you. I am convinced that you are doing much good in my states. Continue to work as you are doing. I shall be very glad to see you again, and I will serve and protect you on all occasions that present themselves."

We can hardly (to repeat a former remark) realize nowadays how Frenchmen of that day felt towards the Grand Monarque, and how important were simple words like these. Father Eudes valued them as securing the permanence of his Congregation which had cost him so dearly during so much of his life. " I shall be glad to see you again." But no. In another year the holy old man was to appear before the King of kings.

CHAPTER X.

A HAPPY ENDING.

OF the life-story of Blessed John Eudes, which a loving disciple has told in four large volumes of more than two thousand four hundred pages, how much more shall be told here? Nothing except the happy ending. Children, when they ask for stories, will sometimes cry, "Let it have a happy ending!" But most of the stories that are supposed to end happily have in reality not reached the end at all. The only happy ending for the real story of a life is a holy death. Every saint's life, whether confessor or martyr or virgin, ends happily, joyfully, and gloriously.

Father Eudes worked till the end. From the account of his life-long labours one might carry away the impression that he was naturally robust. The saints that were noted for mortification had generally fine constitutions to begin with, and a certain amount of austerity is wholesome. One of the collects of Lent says that the fast was instituted for the health and cure of the body as well as of the soul—*animabus corporibusque curandis salubriter institutum*. Remembering his exhausting labours, so constant and so long continued, and

the great austerities he practised habitually, our wonder is increased when we learn that his constitution was naturally delicate and that he was brought more than once to the brink of the grave. One of these occasions has been mentioned at the beginning of his priestly life, and another occurred towards the end, in the year 1678. He then prepared definitely for death, repeating constantly what his biographer says had been the habitual cry of his soul during life—the culmination of the Apocalypse, that last word of the inspired word of God—*Veni, Domine Jesu!* “Come, Lord Jesus.” He recovered, however, and on November 7, 1678, he wrote to Mother Mary Gabriel, a nun of Montmartre :

“My sins drew upon me a sickness which was conducting me to death ; but He who holds in His hands the keys of life and death has sent death away and preserved my life in order to give me time to be converted and to begin a new life. I desire it ardently and beseech our Lord and His holy Mother to give me the grace to do so and to begin to love them as I ought ; for I know not if I have yet begun. Help me, my very dear Sister, to do so in earnest.”

No doubt he applied to himself the counsels which, six years before, he had given to Sister Mary Agnes on her recovery from sickness. I quote the passage chiefly for the sake of the charming phrase that it ends with.

“I give endless thanks to our most love-

worthy Saviour and His most love-worthy Mother for the relief that they have given you, my very dear daughter. I have had no hand in it, for from nothingness only nothingness can spring. It is the effect of their goodness alone, for which may they be blessed and praised eternally ! Give yourself to them with all your heart, my dear daughter, to serve and honour them with joy, love, and confidence ; and take great care to reject all thoughts that might trouble or disquiet you, and to have recourse to our good Lady in all your difficulties, as a daughter to a very sweet mother. Never has she rejected anyone, and she will not begin with *you*."

In his journey back to Caen from Paris, after he had been restored to the King's favour, the jolting of the carriage over the miserable roads of those days aggravated a disease from which Father Eudes had long suffered, and he was held captive for six weeks on a bed of pain. He determined to ask for a coadjutor. He had authority to choose one for himself, but he preferred not to follow his own will in this important matter. October 9, 1679, he asked the Superiors of the seminaries of Coutances, Lisieux, and Evreux to meet him at Caen, and he let them know that he considered Father de Bonnefonds the best man to help him. In this they all cordially concurred ; but in the official act that they drew up they inserted sundry provisions to secure the full authority of their beloved old Father and Founder.

Father de Bonnefonds had shown great prudence and great devotedness to his Order during the long and troublesome negotiations in which he was Father Eudes' representative at Rome. Yet, in spite of his unquestionable merit, his brethren did not think him the best qualified to succeed the Founder, whose infirmities were increasing and whom they could not hope to keep much longer from his heavenly crown. Father Eudes also felt that his work was completely done, and that the time was come for him to lay down entirely the burden of authority. He insisted on making his resignation; and by a vote of sixteen out of eighteen electors, Father Blouet de Camilly was canonically chosen as his successor, the second General of the Congregation. The new General was forty-eight years of age, a member of a distinguished family, and possessing great influence both within and outside his Order, of which he had already been in a very substantial way a benefactor. The Bishop of Coutances had made him his Vicar-General and Archdeacon, and he had shown remarkable capabilities for administration and government. His after career fulfilled the hopes of his brethren.

The election which freed Father Eudes from the burden he had borne so long took place on the 26th of June, 1680. During the preceding months, and indeed ever since he had been at last obliged to give up the work of the Missions, he had devoted all the time at his disposal to the final revision of his unpublished writings,

especially the largest and perhaps the greatest of all—the thought of *Le Royaume de Jésus* is responsible for that “perhaps,” but certainly the crown of his work as a spiritual writer is *Le Cœur Admirable de la très Sacrée Mère de Dieu*. We have already given a short account of it. On the 25th July, 1680, he wrote in his *Memoriale Beneficiorum Dei* (his “Memorial of God’s Benefits”) these words as the last item: “To-day, July 25, God has given me the grace to finish my book on the ‘Admirable Heart of the Most Holy Mother of God.’” Thus did God bestow upon him the beatitude of the just man—*complevit labores illius*, “He had completed his labours” (Wisdom x. 10). He left nothing unfinished.

After this he began his immediate preparation for death by making his annual retreat explicitly and expressly as his last. Long before, he had drawn up fully the acts proper to be made in preparation for death, and he had repeated these frequently from time to time, and taught them to others. He was thus completely at home with Death. By his earnest, self-sacrificing life he had secured those three fast friends that Coleridge claims for the Great Good Man:

Himself, his Maker, and the Angel Death.

That Angel’s visit did not take Father Eudes by surprise; he had seen him from afar. Nine years before he had written down all the arrangements that he wished to be carried out when mortal sickness should seize upon him, and he had drawn up his will and testament,

which he now read over and ratified. It runs thus :

“ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost and in union with the testament which my Jesus made on the last day of His mortal life on earth, I make this testament for the sole glory of my God in the form and manner following :—

“ I give myself with all my heart to my Saviour in order to unite myself to the most perfect faith of His most holy Mother, of His holy Apostles, of His holy Martyrs, and of all the Church ; and, in union with this faith, I protest in the face of heaven and earth that I wish to die a child of the holy Church Catholic, Apostolical and Roman, and in the belief of all the Christian truths that she teaches. And I offer myself to my God to suffer, with the help of His grace, all torments imaginable and all possible deaths for that Faith.

“ With all my heart I give myself to the infinite love through which my Saviour died on the Cross for me and for all men ; and, in union with this love, I accept and embrace death in the time, place, and manner in which it will please Him to give it to me, in honour and thanksgiving for His holy death and that of His glorious Mother, most humbly begging Him, by the Sacred Heart of this Divine Mother, and by His own adorable Heart, broken and bruised for us with love and with grief on the Cross, to give me the grace to die in His love, by His love, and for His love.

“Prostrate in spirit at the feet of all my brethren and of all the persons to whom I have given any offence or disedification, with all my heart I ask pardon from them, beseeching them to forgive me for the love of our Lord, and to pray to Him for me that He may have mercy on me.

“With all my heart I give myself to that immense charity which made our Saviour on the Cross address this prayer to the Eternal Father for those who were crucifying Him: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’; and in union with this prayer I say to my Heavenly Father, from the very depths of my heart, for all those who have offended me in any way whatsoever, if indeed anyone can offend a miserable sinner like me, ‘Father, forgive them, for they did not know what they were doing.’”

Long as this quotation has been already, it has not given half of this dying saint's last will and testament. He goes on to implore his brethren to administer to him the Holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction while he has the use of his faculties; and he now beforehand unites himself to all the holy dispositions with which the saints and holy souls have received those sacraments. If he should happen to be deprived of the use of reason and his exterior senses, he now beforehand consents with his whole heart to all the acts of faith, hope, and charity, of humility, resignation, and contrition that will then be made for him in heaven or in earth.

For he knows that others will be at that last moment praying for him besides those that are kneeling round his dying bed. It is curious that among these heavenly patrons he does not name a single one of those who have lit up the centuries since our Lord's life on earth. He calls upon them all in general, apostles, martyrs, priests, virgins; but he names only Joseph, Joachim, Anne, Lazarus, Magdalen, Mary, and his two namesakes, the Baptist and the Evangelist. "But above all my divine Mother, the most holy Virgin, to supply for my defects, to fulfil towards my God all my duties, and to do for me all that will be most agreeable to His Divine Majesty, protesting also that I wish every beating of my heart, every throb of my veins, every breath I draw, to be so many acts of contrition, resignation, praise and love for my Creator and my Saviour. With all my heart I give myself to the infinite love with which Jesus gave His holy soul to His Father, saying, *Father, into Thy hands I give my spirit*; and in union with this same love I give my soul to this Father of mercies and God of all consolation, saying to Him, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' I place it also in the most lovable Heart of Jesus and Mary, most ardent furnace of eternal love, humbly beseeching them to burn, consume, and transform it into a most pure flame of divine love."

Fourteen paragraphs follow which do not admit of being applied to ourselves like those I have quoted. But we may all aspire to make

our own of the sentiment expressed in the concluding paragraph :—

“ Finally, with all my heart I give myself to my dear Jesus, in order to unite myself to all the holy dispositions with which He and His most holy Mother and all the saints have died, embracing for love of Him all the pains of body and mind that will happen to me in my last days, protesting to Him that I wish my last sigh to be an act of the purest love for Him, and beseeching Him to accept and to preserve for me against the hour of my death all the sentiments and acts of religion which are set down on this paper.

“ This, then, is my will and testament, of which I most humbly beseech my most lovable Redeemer and his good Mother, by their most merciful heart, to be the executors, and to secure that all the articles that are contained in it may be accomplished in the manner that will be most agreeable to the most admirable Will of my God. Amen, amen! *Fiat, fiat! Veni, veni, Domine Jesu!* ”

This will, from which I have only quoted the portions that we can adapt to our own use; was drawn up in Paris in April, 1671; but it was not to take effect till nine years later. When the holy old man saw that the end was really near, his last act before lying down on his death-bed was to visit his dear daughters, in the convent of Our Lady of Refuge, to bid them good-bye and to ask their prayers. With a feeble voice he exhorted them to fervour and

perseverance, thanked them for all their goodness towards him, and begged them to help him with their prayers in his last hour, which he knew was at hand. And then he blessed them, and their parting was like the pathetic scene towards the end of the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where St. Paul bids farewell to the faithful of Ephesus. "And there was much weeping among them all, being grieved most of all for the word which he had said that they should see his face no more."

A few days nearer the end some one asked him if he were not afraid of death. "I have good reason to be afraid of it, but I hope in the mercies of my God and in the infinite merits of my good Saviour. I hope in the goodness of His most holy Mother, who is mine also, that she will not abandon me."

His death was not one of those painless deaths that seem to be common. When asked if he suffered, he had to answer, "Terribly." And then he added: "But, O my God, I accept my sufferings with all my heart. You know that I have never had any other will than Yours." In his weak state he insisted on kneeling to receive the last visit of our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Every word and every look gave edification to his sons gathered round his bed, till on the nineteenth of August, 1680, his soul broke away at last. Surely the word that had just been spoken over him must have been fully verified; surely "Jesus Christ appeared to him with a mild and festive countenance, and

placed him among those who are to stand before Him for ever." One of his biographers, Father Martine, could very reasonably exclaim: "After having guided so many souls to heaven, after having led so pure and holy a life, after having suffered so many afflictions and persecutions, what a glorious share in the bliss of heaven had he not a right to hope for!"

But God's goodness to him has gone far beyond all his hopes, and he is blessed for ever. Blessed John Eudes, pray for us poor sinners, now and at the hour of our death. In these passing hours of our life obtain for us the grace to imitate in our poor measure your purity of life, your assiduity in prayer, your compassion for sinners, your charity for the poor and suffering, your meekness and patience, your unwearying labours, your love of the Blessed Eucharist, your devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, your zeal for the glory of God.

APPENDIX.

The Pope's Abridgement of the
preceding Life.

From the Decree of Beatification.

PIUS X

Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam.

THE Divine Master, Who protects for ever the Church that He purchased with His Blood, has called ministers of religion the salt of the earth ; and He never allows them to be wanting when, by their help, men are to be rescued from the corruption of sin. He has therefore in His mercy raised up from time to time holy men to provide, with ampler fruit, for the eternal salvation of souls by devoting all their energies to restore ecclesiastical discipline when weakened by the wickedness of the times. Amongst these must assuredly be numbered the venerable servant of God, John Eudes, the illustrious founder of the priests of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, a man truly sent by God, who with heroic virtue laboured to heal as far as possible the injuries done to Religion in France during the seventeenth century.

He was born on the 14th of November, 1601, in the village of Ri, in the diocese of Séz. His pious and respectable parents, Isaac Eudes and Martha

Corbin, had promised that, if they had a son, they would make a pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de la Recouvrance and there consecrate him to God. Having gained their desire, they took care that their child should be immediately baptized, giving him the name John. Having entered into life so auspiciously, he from his earliest years reproduced perfectly the examples of virtue received from his parents; for he advanced marvellously in piety, and in that chief guardian of the soul, modesty. This was shown in a remarkable incident which occurred when he was scarcely ten years old: one of his comrades gave him a blow on the cheek. John immediately fell on his knees, and obeyed the Gospel precept literally by offering the other cheek.

For his education his father entrusted him to a very pious priest, who trained him not only in learning, but especially in religion, with results that his after sanctity showed. Yearning to embrace the meek and humble Jesus whom he so earnestly copied, and to be sweetly nourished by His immaculate flesh, he was filled with joy when in his twelfth year he made his First Communion and was sealed with the holy chrism. So many and so great were his emotions on that memorable day that he seemed like an angel in a divine rapture; and so marvellous was his union with Christ that soon after he bound himself by a vow of perpetual chastity, and determined to devote himself entirely to God.

He was next admitted into the college which the Fathers of the Society of Jesus (nurse of holy men) directed at Caen. Here his piety was not only maintained but increased: he received Holy Communion so frequently and so fervently, and he showed to our Blessed Lady so tender a love, that he was called by everyone "the devout Eudes."

When his course of philosophy was finished he

returned home. His parents pressed him to settle down in the world ; but he explained to them the purpose that he had formed, and earnestly entreated them to allow him to devote himself entirely to God and the Blessed Virgin. Accordingly he returned again to Caen, and applied himself to the study of theology ; but loathing more and more all profane and perishable things, he began to think of the Oratory of Father de Bérulle, in which he might better exercise the sacred ministry. Again his father opposed his desires ; but John, thinking it wiser to hear the voice of God rather than the voice of nature, pleaded his cause so earnestly that he won at last his father's consent to his entering this Congregation.

He was received at Paris into the Oratory, the object of which was to give missions and to train young men in piety and learning in ecclesiastical seminaries. It may easily be conjectured with what zeal the venerable servant of God applied himself to the salvation of his own soul and of other souls. Indeed, his virtues of all kinds, crowned by the most profound humility, shone forth so brightly from the first that the duty of preaching was imposed upon him before he had received Holy Orders, and those first beginnings led all who heard him to form the highest expectations of his future.

At length, at the end of the year 1625, came the long-desired day when the holy man was ordained priest at Paris, and offered up his first Mass with such devotion that greater there could not be. When nine months a priest, broken down either by the austerity of his life or by the toils he had gone through, he fell into a sickness from which he slowly recovered in complete retirement, making use of his enforced leisure to study spiritual books and Holy Scripture.

But his life was soon exposed to still greater peril ; for when a letter from his father informed him that cholera was ravaging his native place, he at once flew thither and laboured night and day for the cure of the bodies and especially of the souls of the poor victims of the plague. He induced the inhabitants of Argentan to address their petitions with great public solemnity to the Blessed Virgin Mary, entreating her to drive away the calamity that hung over them. They at once experienced her protection, and were wonderfully saved from the horrible scourge.

In this same field of glory the virtue of the venerable servant of God shone forth a second time ; for, four years later, Caen was attacked by this dreadful plague. Father Eudes went at once to its relief, and gave again splendid proofs of his zeal and charity. Fearing only that others might catch the pestilence from him, he would not lodge in any house, but passed the night in a barrel in an open field, called ever afterwards the Saint's Meadow. These toils nearly cost him his life. He fell sick again, but happily recovered ; and at once he undertook with incredible alacrity the apostolic ministry, preaching incessantly in villages, towns, and cities. In this manner, during very many years up to extreme old age, he exhorted to a Christian life the people who were then sunk in vice ; and for the joyful fruits of penance that he gathered everywhere he was likened to St. Vincent Ferrer. The bishops, relying not more on the power of his sermons than upon his sanctity, vied with one another in summoning John to their aid, feeling assured, each prelate for the faithful of his own diocese, that mighty multitudes of them would flock to hear the herald of God and would be converted by the words and the example of so great a man. It is well to remember that John was so

pre-eminent among the preachers of that time that M. Olier, the founder of the Society of St. Sulpice, who invited him to Paris to preach in his church, called him the prodigy of the age, and the Queen of France, as well as the learned Bossuet, looked upon him as one to be proposed as a model to all sacred orators.

The venerable servant of God, who had been appointed Rector of the Oratory at Caen, having sought in vain for leave to establish a seminary according to the Institute, began to see with no little pain that this Institute had failed entirely in its principal office : therefore, after imploring the divine help by prayers and fasts, and after seeking counsel from many, he at length, with great reluctance, separated from his brethren with whom he had been associated for twenty years. March 25th, 1643, he and five of his priests began a new congregation of priests to which he gave the most holy names of Jesus and Mary, and opened at Caen the first seminary, which in the following year was duly confirmed by the authority of the Bishop of Bayeux.

It is incredible what bitter envy, to which saints are not unaccustomed, was from this time excited against the venerable servant of God, especially by the Jansenists, on account of his unswerving loyalty to the Roman See ; but admirable likewise were the humility and the fortitude with which John suffered all patiently, calling his enemies brothers and offering up prayers for them. That first seminary, which John as interpreter and heir of Cardinal de Bérulle's plans and purposes, erected according to the prescriptions of the Council of Trent, was soon, at the desire of various Bishops, followed by many others, in which full provision was made for the training of the young clergy in learning and piety ; and thus the Eudist Congregation, like the

mustard seed, grew up into a great tree and soon spread out its branches far and wide.

Another work of this venerable servant of God was to institute a Congregation of Daughters of Our Lady of Charity, adding to the three vows of religion a fourth vow about recalling fallen women to a virtuous life. This community was in the lifetime of its Founder raised by our predecessor, Alexander the Seventh, into a religious Order, which is now established everywhere. Father Eudes founded also a sodality, still existing, which takes its name from the Admirable Heart of the Mother of God ; and he inaugurated other works of piety and charity, suited to the sex, age, and condition of the faithful, wherein he provided, in every way that he could, for the good of souls.

But his services to the Church received a vast increase when, burning with a singular love for the most holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, he was the first to think, not without some divine inspiration, of offering to them liturgical worship. Of this most sweet exercise of piety, therefore, he is to be considered the father, since from the beginning of his congregation of priests he provided that the feasts of those sacred Hearts should be celebrated among them ; the doctor also, for he composed special offices and masses in their honour ; and finally the apostle, for he strove with all his might to spread everywhere this most salutary devotion.

In the midst of all these labours he never ceased to preach the Word of God to the people and to compose many excellent writings redolent of a singular piety. The most eminent men in France esteemed him highly, and were eager to consult with him ; and St. Vincent de Paul himself was full of admiration for the fruits derived from his missions.

When this illustrious man, worn out by labours

rather than by years, saw that the end of his life was at hand, he desired more and more to be dissolved and to be with Christ. But before laying his frail body on the bed from which he was never to rise, he visited the Daughters of Our Lady of Charity and bade them a last farewell, praying that the dew of heavenly joy might be poured out upon them. Then, giving himself up entirely to the disposal of the divine will, he showed the most perfect patience in his bodily sufferings, and seemed to enjoy the tranquillity of the blessed. His malady grew worse ; and so, fortified by all the sacred rites of religion and surrounded by his sons, to whom, as they wept beside his bed, he addressed the words of eternal life, repeating very often the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, he slept most peacefully in the Lord, on the nineteenth day of August, 1680.

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